THE Voice of one Crying IN A WILDERNESS. OR

The buſineſs of a Chriſtian, both Antecedaneous to, Concomitant of, and Conſequent upon, a ſore and heavy Viſitation; Repreſented in ſeveral Sermons.

First, Preached to his own Family, lying under ſuch Viſitation; And now made Publike as a Thank-offering to the Lord his healer.

By *S. S.* A Servant of God in the Goſpel of his Son.

All the Paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto ſuch as keep his covenant and his teſtimonies. *Pſal.* 25. 10.

Mala pœnalia non ſunt vera mala, quia fluunt à ſummo Bono, nimirum Deo; ducunt ad ſummum bonum, nimirum fruitionem Dei; & inveniuntur in ſumma bono, nimirum Chriſto. Biel.

The evils of Puniſhment are not really evils; for they flow from the chiefeſt good, even God; they lead to the chiefeſt good, the enjoyment of God; and are found in the chiefeſt good, even Chriſt Jeſus.

LONDON, Printed, *Anno Dom.* 1666.

TO THE READER.

Chriſtian Readers,

IT is now more than ſeaven months, ſince it pleaſed the holy and wiſe God, (together with ſome dear and Chriſtian friends from London,) to viſit my houſe with the Plague; whereby he gently toucht and gave warning to my ſelf and whole family, (conſiſting then of eight ſouls) but called away hence only three members of it, viz. two tender babes, and one ſervant; beſides my beloved ſiſter, and a child of my precious friend, that man of God, Mr. G. C. (ſince alſo tranſlated) who were of thoſe Citizens that

visited me; You will easily believe that I can have no pleasure to rake into the ashes of the dead, nor to revive the tast of that wormwood and gall, which was then given me to drink; and yet I see no reason, but that I ought to take pleasure in the pure and holy will of God, (which always proceeds by the eternal rules of Almighty love and goodness;) though the same be executed upon my deerest creature-comforts, and grow never so much upon my sweetest earthly-interest: yea and I see all reason in the world why I should give God the glory of his Attributes and works before all the world, and endeavour that some instruction may accompany that astonishment, which from me and my house hath gone out and spread it self far and near. I will not undertake to make any Physical observations upon this unaccountable disease; nor to vindicate my self either from that great guilt that is charged upon me, as if I were a sinner above all that dwell in this countrey; or from those many false and senseless aspersions, that have been cast upon my behaviour (during this visitation) much like that we read of Mat. 28. 13. *but do freely commit my self to him that judgeth righteously, and pray with the Psalmist* (*Psal.* 69. 6.) Let not them that wait on

thee

thee O Lord God of Hosts be ashamed for my sake; let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of *Israel! Neither do I purposely undertake in this Preface to reconcile the providences of the most wise God to his promises, or to salve that seeming difference between the words of his mouth, and the language of his hands; between which I have only suspected some kind of jarr, but have experienc't an excellent harmony* —— In very faithfulness hast thou afflicted me. *Whence arise all those uncharitable censures, with which the afflicted soul is apt to charge both himself and his God too? Spring they not certainly from these two grand causes, viz. A misapprehension of the nature of God, and of the nature of Good and Evil? let the studious and pious Reader, search and judge. If ever therefore you would be establisht in your minds in a day of affliction*; (1.) Labour to be rightly informed concerning the nature of God. *Away with those low and gross apprehensions of God, whereby your carnal fancies do ascribe unto God such a kind of indulgence towards his children as you bear towards yours; which indeed no way agrees to his nature. His good will towards his children is a solid, wise, and holy disposition, infinitely*

infinitely unlike to our humane affections. Soli Deo competit, Amare & Sapere. (:.) Labour to be rightly informed concerning the nature of good and evil. *Judge not the goodneſs or evilneſs of things by their agreeableneſs or diſagreeableneſs to your fleſh, palate, or carnal intereſt; but by the relation that they have to the ſupream good. The greateſt proſperity in the world is no further good, than as it tends to make us partakers of God; and the greateſt affliction may thus be really good alſo. But that by the* By. *My deſign is to juſtifie and glorifie Infinite Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Goodneſs and Holineſs before all men. Oh bleſſed God! who maketh a ſeeming* Dungeon *to be indeed a* Wine-celler; *who bringeth his poor people into a* Wilderneſs *on ſet purpoſe there to* ſpeak comfortably *to them!* Iſ. 2. 14. *Be of good cheer, O my ſoul! He hath taken away nothing but what he* gave; *and, in lieu of it, hath given thee that which ſhall* Job 1. 21. *never be* taken away; *the* firſt fruits of life, Rev. 14. 4. *inſtead of thoſe whom the* firſt-born of death *hath devoured. But why do I ſay devoured? Doth not that truly live at this day, which was truly lovely in thoſe darlings? Didſt thou, O my fond heart love Beauty, Sweetneſs, Ingenuity incarnate? And canſt*

thou

thou not love it still in the fountain, and enjoy it in a more immediate and compendious way? Thy body indeed cannot taste sweetness in the abstract, nor see beauty except it be subjected in matter: but canst not thou (O my soul) taste the Uncreated goodness and sweetness, except it be embodyed, and have some material thing to commend it to thy palat? Be shamed, that thou being a spirit as to thy constitution art no more spiritual in thy affections and operations. Dost thou with sadness reflect upon those sweet Smiles, and that broken Rhetorick with which those Babes were wont to entertain thee? (1.) Consider duly what of real contentment thou hast lost in losing those. For what were those things to thy real happiness? Thou hast lost nothing, but what it was no solid pleasure nor true felicity to enjoy, nothing but what the most sensual and brutish souls do enjoy as much as they. (2.) Be ashamed rather that thou didst enjoy them in such a gross and unspiritual manner. Art thou troubled because any earthly interest is violated? Rather be ashamed that thou hadst and cherishedst any such interest.

But pardon me (Courteous Readers) this digressive Soliloquy, and now suffer me pa-

tiently, whilest I speak something by way of Admiration, *something by way of* Observation, *and something by way of* Exhortation.

1. *Let me call upon Men and Angels to help me in celebrating the Infinite and almighty grace and goodness of the Eternal and blessed God,*

Who enabled me to abide the day of
Mal.3. 2. his coming, *to stand when he appeared: and made me willing to suffer him to* sit as a Refiner of silver *in my house!*

Who carryed me above all murmurings against, I had almost said, all remembrance of those instruments that conveyed the infection to me!

Who reconciled my heart to this Disease, so that it seemed no more grievous, noysome, or scandalous than any other!

Who subdued me to, I had almost said, brought me in love with this passage of the Divine Will! I can remember, (alass, that I can say little more, but that I do remember!) how my soul was overpowred, yea and almost ravisht with the goodness, holiness and perfection of the will of God: and verily judged it my happiness and perfection (as well as my duty) to comply cheerfully with it, and be molded into it.

Who gave me a most powerful and quick sense of the Plague of a carnal heart, self-will, and inordinate creature-loves, convincing me that those were infinitely worse than the Plague in the flesh; so that I did more pitty, than I could be pitied by my ordinary visiters!

Who wonderfully preserved me from the assaults of the Devil, never let him loose so much as to try his strength upon my integrity, to drive me to a despondency, or to any uncharitable conclusions concerning my state!

Who enabled me to converse with his love and mercy in the midst of his chastening, to see his shining and smiling face through this dark cloud: yea, kept my clear and steady perswasions in my soul that I was beloved of him, though afflicted by him!

Who knew my soul in adversity, *visited* Psal. 3
me when I was sick and in prison, *refreshed, strengthned, comforted my inner man in a marvelous manner and measure, and made me appear to my self* never less *Numq*
shut up, then when shut up! *Oh would to* *minu*
God, I might be never worse than when I *lus, q*
was shut up of the Plague! The not re- *cum f*
moving of that affliction-frame, I shall Scip.
count a greater blessing, and a more proper

mercy, than the removing of that afflicted *state.*

Who cleared up my interest in his Son, strengthened my evidences of his love, satisfied and assured my soul of its happy state, more than at any time, more then at all times, formerly! I had clearer and surer evidences of Divine grace in that patient, self denying, self-submitting frame of spirit, than in all the duties that ever I performed: The valley of tears *brought me more sight of my God, more insight into my self, then ever the* valley of visions, *all duties and ordinances had done. When the Sun of righteousness arose upon my soul, and chased away all the mists and foggs of self-will, and creature loves, then also did all black and dismal fears, all gloomy doubtings most sensibly flee before him.*

Who supplyed my Family from compassionate friends, with all things needful for Food, Physick, &c. The Lord return it sevenfold into their bosoms!

Who maintained my health in the midst of sickness, in the midst of so great a death! I do not remember that either sorrow of mind, or sickness of body ever prevailed so much upon me, during three months seclusion, as to hinder me of my ordinary study, repast, devotions,

devotions, or my necessary attendance upon my several infected rooms, and administring to the necessities of my sick. These ensuing Discourses were then composed, which doth (at least) argue, that (through grace) this mind was not altogether discomposed, nor body neither.

Who preserved me and gave me not up to death! For I judge that I was personally visited with the Plague, though not with the Sickness.

Who hath given me a sincere and settled resolution, and vehement desire to live entirely on and to Himself; which I account to be the only life of a soul, and only worthy to be called a living! Grant me this prayer, O most blessed and gracious God, for the sake of my only and dear Redeemer!

Thou O Lord God, who art witness to all my thoughts, and words, and works, knowest that in truth and soberness I publish these things to the world, not to advance the reputation of my own silly name, or to be admired of my fellow creatures, but for the glory of thy holy name, to beget a good liking of so gracious a Creator in all thy poor creatures, who are prejudiced against thee and thy holy Service; and to strengthen the hearts of thy servants to a most firm

and lasting adherence to thee even in the greatest extremities: that thou mayest be admired in thy Saints, and glorified for giving such power, and grace, and comfort unto men. And, oh that men would praise
Ps. 107. 8. the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works *in and* to the children of men!

2. Suffer me to make a short Observation of some few memorable Passages, out of many; possibly they may be for the future, though they should not be for your present advantage: The Lord direct you to make a right application of them, according to the emergencies of life!

First, I do thankfully record the gracious design of the holy, and wise God, in that he had secretly prepared my heart, though at that time I knew not particularly for what. I remember that for some few weeks before, I had found a more than ordinary largeness and readiness of soul; particularly, that I had been studying the excellent mysterie, and sucking out the strengthning marrow of that famous Text (1 Joh. 4. 8.) God is love; from whence I had importunately prest upon my self the reasonableness of complying sweetly, cheerfully, universally with the will of God; little dreaming

dreaming then of the Plague, which was almost an hundred miles off me. Oh blessed and merciful God, who of old didst make Abraham, and yet makest his and thy children to follow thee, though they know not well whither! Heb. 11

In the next place, I count it most worthy of my observation, (not unworthy of your consideration) that it pleased God to fall upon my Family in the beginning of harvest; a harvest which I had too earnestly expected, too carefully provided for, and promised my self too liberally from: which folly and vanity of mind, this Visitation thus timed, did so clearly convince me of (me thought) as if I had seen an hand-writing upon the wall. I am ashamed, yet I will not stick to confess before all the world (God grant it may be for the seasonable and effectual warning of any.) that my vainer mind was over-plausantly (not to say ingenly) drawn out towards secular and worldly (however necessary) employments and concernments: And thus I was rebuked.

Upon examination, I find that verily I have been guilty concerning my Children. I do not remember that ever any man reproved me for immoderate loving of them, or could for any indulgence that could be by

humane eyes discerned; But oh I see and feel it as a sword at my heart, that I loved them not so purely spiritually, and properly in God, as I ought to have done. Philosophy will easily prove it to be a more tolerable vanity to acte upon a Child, than upon a Kingdom: But Christian Divinity doth abundantly demonstrate all creature-fondness unreasonable and intolerable.

The next thing that I will record shall be, the difficult task that I found, to maintain a right humble, and a right cheerful frame at the same time: oh how oft, and how long did I labour under this difficulty! That sense of sin which was called in to promote tenderness of heart, being overmuch indulged, was ready at length to destroy that largeness and cheerfulness of soul which was so much my duty and interest to maintain; and on the other-hand, the sense of Divine Wisdom, Grace, and Love in Christ Jesus, being called in to keep up the soul from sinking, was ready to bear it up so high, as that it almost forgot that it was in the waters. Beware, Christians, and watch diligently, that Godly sorrow do not settle into an ungodly despondency and inconsolable heaviness; the soul not being able to bear up under its own burden; and that a holy

 chearfulness

cheerfulness and serenity do not evaporate into an unholy frothiness and forgetfulness of your infirmities, the soul not being able to manage its own metal and motions.

I know, you would willingly understand something of the frame of my heart at that day, respective to my departure out of this world: you will best read my heart in the ensuing discourse (upon 2 Cor. 5. 6.) which I think was fetched from thence. I shall therefore say no more as to this matter; only acquaint you with one eminent Experience, relating hereunto. My mind, or fancy, or appetite (I know not well what to call it) was sometimes casting in me some desires to live yet longer; I entered the lists with this temptation, and when I had fairly and calmly debated the ground and reason of such inclination, after many shifts and pretences it came to this: I would fain perswade my self, I was not yet holy enough: this I did immediately consent to knowing it to be a certain truth: But that therefore I should desire to prolong my dayes upon earth, this was a fallacious Inference.

Me-

Me thought I pleased my self a while, whilst I could say, I desired only to live to be better: But after a time I apprehended a fallacy in this pretence; for the way to be perfected in holiness, is, not living, but indeed dying. Christians, if indeed your souls be sincerely and powerfully effected towards perfect holiness, then sing not so much with David, Spare me that I may recover, &c. *as with good old* Simeon, *who having seen God in the flesh, desired to go out of the flesh, that he might see him more fully and beatifically.* — Now lettest thou thy servant depart, &c. *I cannot inlarge upon this Observation, I suppose I have hinted enough to shew those pretences of many men, viz. that they would fain live to be more fit to dye, to be, for the most part, but a kind of mockery, and self deceit.*

Psa. 39. 13.

Luk. 2. 29.

Lastly, (that I be not overtedious) I do solemnly and sincerely profess before God, and Angels, and Men, that I was never so much as inclined to think hardly of God or his good and holy wayes, because of this dispensation; but did then constantly and freely proclaim

to

to all that came to visit me, that sin, particularly self will, and sensual loves, are the worst of plagues, and holiness the only happiness of man; yea afflicted holiness infinitely to be preferred before prosperous wickedness.

3. *Suffer me, as a conclusion of this Preface, and as a result from all that I have seen and suffered, to commend unto you a few excellent and necessary duties. I have much adoe to forbear being large here, but I have already transgrest, therefore I will wave those common Themes, of remembring your Creator betimes, of hearkening to the voice of his Word before his Rod speak, of living in continual preparation for death, of repenting and renewing repentance, &c. and only commend two or three things, which seem to me of most excellent and necessary importance.*

——— petimu q; damu q: vicissim

1. Love and enjoy all things in God. *Admire Divine Goodness in every created excellency, and taste a Divine sweetness in every created comfort. O how is the noble soul of man debased, pinched, confined by low and sensual loves, whilst*

many

many men love the creature in opposition to the Creator, most men in competition with him, and almost all men in a way of separation from him! Oh base and degenerate affections! Let God be All things in your eye, so that you shall see, nor know, nor love, nor taste nothing but him in the world. Deliver your selves (oh immortal souls, to whom I write) from all those low, and straitning, and starving creature-loves, and long and labour to be filled with pure, and holy, and spiritual delights, such as the Angels of God have, such as the Son of God had, when he Joh. 4.34. made it his meat and drink to do the will of his Father. But this you will find more largely prosecuted and prest in the last of these following Discourses. Therefore,

2. Live purely at the pleasure of God, and maintain an universal and hearty compliance with his holy and perfect will. *Believe it, you will never enjoy a firm and steady peace, till you have committed all your wills and ways to him, and wrapt up all your interests and ends in him, till your hearts*

be

be conformed to the heart of God, and your wills molded into his will. It is a difference of wills and ends, and a distinction of interests that beget all these ragings and stormings in the hearts of men against God: Mine *and* Thine *do not only divide the world amongst men, but divide men against God, Earth against Heaven. Take this for a certain and undoubted Aphorism, that* the grand interest of a soul is to comply with, and be one with God: *Communion of hearts, and wills, and interests, and ends, is that glorious fellowship which a creature hath with its Creator; it is indeed the interest and honour, the duty and dignity, yea the Heaven and happiness of the reasonable creature: But something to this purpose you will find in the first Discourse.*

3. *I beseech you Christians, be not content to say, you have chosen God for your chiefest good, but* pursue after him as such, without grudging, and without ceasing, longing to be as much one with him in a participation of divine perfections, as our created natures are capable. *Maintain a holy and secret*

striving

striving of soul towards this blessed object continually, as a thing moves towards its center, as a soul ought to endeavour to accomplish its own perfections: stand not gazing upon a Heaven to come, but labour to draw down all that peace, joy, love, purity, which Heaven is, into your own souls, by growing up into the life of God daily. Reckon that you are never in a right temper, except you be in Davids *temper, when he waited for God more*
Psa. 130. 6 *than they that watch for the morning,*
Psa. 119. 20. *when his soul broke for the longing that it had unto him at all times. I say not, that you should prepare for death, that seems too low, both word and thing; look and live beyond death and the grave, be lifting up your heads to discover the dawnings of the day of your Redemption, be laying hold upon immortality and eternal life. Something to this purpose you will find in the second Discourse, whither I refer you.*

And now accept, I pray you, these poor labours, which for the glory of my God, I make publick, that since, with Hezekiah,
2 King 20. 8. *I may not go up to the House of the Lord, to declare the goodness of the Lord;*

yet

yet I may leave ſome monument of it in wri ing, *as he did,* when he had been ſick, Iſa. 38. 9.
and was recovered of his ſickneſs. *I will add no more, but entreat all ſerious and devout Readers to magnifie the holy name of God on my behalf, adding thereunto their earneſt prayers to God for me,* viz. *that the ſame fire that burnt up the* ſtanding Corn *of my creature-comforts, may alſo happily conſume all the* ſtubble *of my creature-delights and loves, that my God would give me a* name better
than of Sons and of Daughters, *the bleſ-* Iſa 56 5.
ſed fruits *of his* Spirit *inſtead of* the Beloved fruits of the womb, *that I may for ever live under the moſt powerful influences of this diſpenſation, and that the glory of the Lord may never depart out of the Temple of my ſoul, as it departed out of the Temple made with hands. Now to the God of all grace and peace, be all praiſe and glory! To him I commit you all; and reſt*

Feb. 27. 1665. Your friend and ſervant in Chriſt Jeſus,

S. S.

Quod ſani *quæſivimus*, hoc *invenimus* ægri:
Quæ nequiit vallis *viſûs*, tulit hæc *lacrymarum*.

Courteous Reader,

THere being through ſome ill circumſtances, ſuch a miſtake happened in the Printing of theſe Papers, which cauſed a confuſion not to be afterward helpt by the placing of them: thou art deſired to take notice, that after thoſe words, *Curſe God and Die*, page 31. ſhould have followed the ſecond Reaſon, which is now to be found in the midſt of pag. 43. and ſo the ſenſe is continued to pag. 102. after which comes in the Application, pag. 31. to pag. 43. where the firſt Diſcourſe is concluded with thoſe words, *Whoſoever ſinneth, hath not ſeen him, nor known him.* I ſhall ſuppoſe thy candour ſuch as to excuſe this trouble thou art unhappily put to, which I have done what I could to leſſen by this Notice and Direction; and ſhould but increaſe it by any farther Apology for a fault, which now admits not of a remedy.

Other ſlighter *Errata*'s correct thus:

§ Page 13 line 19 for *the*, read *a*: l. 20 for *a*, r. *the*: p. 15 l. 4. for *ſo*, r. *to*: p. 46 l. 8. put in *hold of*: and l. 9. blot out *here*: p. 68. l. 7. for *had*, r. *hath*: p. 81. l. 2 for *act*, read *art*; and l. *ult.* for *promiſes*, r. *premiſes*: p. 85. l. 4. for *on*, r. *up*: p. 125. l. 4 for *more*, r. *meer*: p. 136. l. 9. blot out *it*: p 157. l. 22. for *it*, r. *Chriſt*: p. 193. l. 15. for *the*, r. *your*: p. 214. l. 12. for *them*, r. *him*.

Place this after the Epiſtle to the Reader.

A

VVelcome TO THE PLAGUE.

AMOS 4. 12.

—*Prepare to meet thy God O* Israel.

IN this Sermon of the Prophet, the Lord reckons up the many fearful Plagues wherewith from time to time he had assayed to reclaim this perverse people, the ten Tribes of *Israel*, beginning at the 6th. *verse*: But still concludes the relation,

with a doleful *Epiphonema*, *yet have ye not returned unto me.* It is not my business to enquire into the several Plagues, either the clear meaning of them, or the particular time when they took place or ended; nor into the impenitence and stubbornesse of the people; though many useful things might be observed from hence. But in the conclusion, because none of these judgments had prevailed upon them, God resolves to trouble himself with them no longer, but to destroy them utterly. All that he had done to them in the Land, had not prevailed, therefore now he will cast them and carry them out of the Land, by the over-flowing scourge of an *Assyrian* captivity: This threatning he denounces in the second and third verses, *I will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fish-hooks, &c.* And after he had reckoned up the many calamities whereby he had sought to bring them to repentance, but they repented not, and so had demonstrated the equitableness of this final judgment, he reassumes the same threatning, and persists in his former resolution, *verf.* 12. *Therefore thus will I do unto thee*; And then adds; *Because I will do thus unto thee, therefore prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.*

Which

Which words may either be understood *Ironically*, by way of derision of all their vain confidences and refuges; and then the *Doctrine* is, *That there is no standing before, nor striving against, nor flying from God when he comes to execute vengeance*: Which is an excellent truth, and of great use. Or else the words may be understood *seriously* by way of exhortation. The doubt seems to arise from the ambiguous meaning of the word [*Meet*] The word קרה signifies both to meet in a *hostile* manner, to assault, invade or grapple with, as a man meets his enemy; so it is used concerning *David* addressing himself to fight with *Goliah*, 1 *Sam.* 17. 48. *He ran to meet the Philistin*: And also to meet in a *friendly*, amicable manner, by way of communication, collocution, salutation or converse. So it is used concerning *Isaac* going to meet *Rebekah*, *Gen.* 24. 65. and concerning Gods meeting of *Balaam* to speak with him, and impart his mind to him. *Numb.* 23. 4. If we take the word in the first sense, then it is spoken by way of Irony or derision, and so the meaning of the words is contained in the Proposition that I have laid down. If we take the words in the latter sense, then it is spoken seriously by way of ex-

 hortation,

hortation, and ſo the meaning of them may be wrapt up into this.

Doct. *That it is the duty of Gods people to ſtudy a right behaviour towards him, and to converſe with him aright in the way of his judgments, in the time of their afflictions.* And in this ſenſe I ſhall take them, and proſecute them. Beſides that general, unalterable godly frame and behaviour which Gods people owe to him as a ſtanding duty and indiſpenſable homage; there are ſome more eſpecial behaviours and tempers which they owe to him in ſpecial caſes, and are duties *pro hic & nunc*, as the ſeaſon requireth. Particularly, there are ſome ſpecial behaviours required at our hands in the time of our affliction: And theſe both 1. Towards our ſelves, as ſelf-examination, ſelf-judging, renewing of repentance, &c. 2. Towards men, meekneſs, compaſſion, inſtructing, warning, comforting, &c. 3. Towards God, as we ſhall ſee anon. An afflicted condition doth call for ſome more eſpecial tempers and behaviours towards our ſelves and others: But theſe I am not to ſpeak unto from this Text. It is the ſouls meeting God, behaviour towards him, converſing with him, that my Text leads me to treat of, and I ſhall not vary from

from it. In handling of which Position, I shall take this Method. 1. Premise some things needful to be known, concerning the souls conversing with God: For I shall retain the word [*converſing*] throughout my discourse, as being a single, yet a large and significant word. 2. Shew what it is for a soul to converse with God, and how it comes to converse with him. 3. Prove the doctrine, That it is our duty to converse with God in the way of his judgments. 4. Shew particularly, how we are to converse with God in the time of afflictions. 5. Apply it.

1. I shall premise some things needful to be known, that tend to clear up my way to the following discourse.

1. I premise, That *it is the great duty of man to converse with God.* I have read that it was a common precept that the Jewish Doctors were wont to give to the people, that they should single out some one Commandment, and exercise themselves very diligently in the observation of it; that therein they might make God their friend, and make him a kind of amends for the breach of many others. I doubt it has Rode that too many Professors live by, who not having the genuine and generous spirit of

true Religion, do parcel out their obedience into some little shreds of homage and devotion, and instead of consecrating their whole lives to God, do content themselves with some circumstancial and light obedience, and think themselves people of great attainments, if they do but severely exercise themselves to hearing twice a week, and prayer twice a day, and a few other acts of more solemn Worship. Certainly this is a penurious and needy spirit, much unlike the generous ample, and free-born spirit of true Religion. The duty, the whole duty, the constant duty of man is to converse with God, commended in *Enoch* by the name of *walking with God*, Gen. 5. 22. Where you may observe of him, that he did not only *set out* fairly with God, or *take a turn or two* with him, but he *walked with him* three hundred years together. The same God calls for from *Abraham*, under the same name, *Gen.* 17. 1. Walk before me, and be perfect. But it is not only the command of God that makes this a duty: If there had been no express commandment concerning it, yet were it the duty of every man, necessarily flowing from the relation of a reasonable creature. Man is a creature, so he must needs *live*

upon

upon God; and as a reasonable creature, so he ought to *live with him and unto him*. Therefore hath God given unto man a noble rational soul, not only that he might talk and work, manage the creatures, and converse with the world; but that he might converse with the God of the world, that Infinite, blessed and glorious Being. This is the very end of mans Creation, as man, as a reasonable creature? This was the end of his being created in the Image of God; and when he was fallen from this Image, this was the end of his Redemption by Christ Jesus, that Heaven and Earth might be reconciled, and those that were far off might be brought nigh; sin is a sinking of the soul down to it self and the creature: And redemption from sin is nothing else but a recovery of the soul into a state of favour and fellowship with God. So that whatever is expressed by *Faith* and *Repentance*, is contained in this one word, *Converse with God*. It is the great, the necessary, and as I may say, the natural duty of the Reasonable Soul.

2. *It is the highest priviledge of man.* The *Prerogative* of man above the Beasts is his *Reason*; and the *Glory* of reason is, that

it is *capable* of knowing, loving, enjoying, and converſing with the Supreme and Infinite Good. The priviledge of Reaſon is not (as too many think) that it is capable of underſtanding Arts and Sciences; that it is capable of climbing up into the nature and courſe of the Heavens, and diving into the ſecret depths of the Earth, and Sea, and the creatures therein contained; but in converſing with the Infinite and Glorious God. How miſerably do vulgar ſouls abuſe this noble faculty, who exerciſe it only in diſcourſing, numbring, and ordering the poor concernments of the world and the body! Yea, certainly thoſe wiſe men, thoſe *Scribes*, thoſe *Diſputers of this world*, as the Apoſtle calls them, who cry up this faculty and glory ſo much in it, and yet do not exerciſe it about that high and eternal Being, do not converſe with God in pure affections, and God-like diſpoſitions and converſations, but expend thoſe vaſt treaſures of reaſon upon ſecrets in Nature, ſecrets in Art, ſecrets in State, or any other created Being, do enthrall their own ſouls, which they ſay are ſo free-born, and captivate and confine that noble principle, which they themſelves do ſo much magnifie: For ſin is certainly the great and only

only ſhame and reproach of an immortal ſoul: And indeed theſe men, though they put their ſouls to ſomewhat a more noble drudgery, yet are really no more happy than the vulgar ſort, who ſpend the ſtrength of their ſouls about eating and drinking, plowing or ſowing, or keeping of Cattel. What difference, I pray you, in point of true happineſs is there, between Boys playing with Pins and Points, and old mens hugging of Baggs and Lands? The nobleſt Sciences, the greateſt Commands, the moſt enriching Traffiques are as very toys in compariſon of true happineſs, as the poor dunghil-poſſeſſions of vulgar men: And the wiſe, the rich, the learned, the honourable of the world, that take up with an employment in this world, and with a happineſs in themſelves, or in any creature, do as much diſgrace their own ſouls, and as truly live below their own faculties, as he doth that knows no higher good than food and rayment, no higher employment than to toil all his dayes in a ditch. For indeed, as to all things but converſing with God, man ſeems to be but equal, perhaps inferiour to the beaſts that periſh. Doth man eat, drink, ſleep, work? ſo do they. Doth man find any ſenſual pleaſure, which the

beaſts

beasts do not sensate as well as he? Nay, the Gormandizing Emperour envyed the Cranes long neck; and others have envyed the more able and permanent lusts of the brute beasts, because themselves have been inferiour to them therein, and have enjoyed less sensual pleasure than they. If any glory in their knowledge of natural and political things; I could instance in the strong memory, great sagacity, quick fancy, wonderful perceptions of many beasts, and their strange knowledge of many secrets which they never learnt by Books, no nor gathered gradually by Observations. And as for mans communications of his notions by words and phrases, I doubt not to affirm, that there is something like to be found in Beasts and Birds: yea, that very beauty and flower of sound, even Musick (which some men magnifie so much) is more fairly and sweetly uttered by the silly Bird that sits solitary upon a bough, than by the Quiristers of the Popes Cathedral. What solid Prerogative worth naming remains to man above his fellow-creatures, but his conversing with God, which we call *Religion*, and is indeed Reason rectified, sanctified, exalted, and boyled up into its pure and primitive perfection?

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In so much that I have sometimes thought, that I never heard a more reproachful word spoken concerning degenerate man, neither do I think that any thing can be spoken of him more shameful and dishonourable, than what the Apostle saith of the Heathen, *Ephes.* 2. 12. ——*Without God in the world.* By conversing with God in the world, is *man* truly raised *above the beasts*, and *the godly man above all other men.* Nay, hereby is the godly soul advanced to the dignity and glory of the Holy Angels, or at least to a parity of happiness: For it is this that is their perfection and glory, as we find it described in *Mat.* 18. 10.——*They always behold the face of God.* And therefore our blessed Saviour doth affirm, that the Saints in the Resurrection, who shall be raised above all creature-communion, to live upon God singly and entirely, shall be ἰσάγγελοι, *equal to the Angels of God*, Luk. 20. 36. In a word, this is the most real Heaven; setting aside all circumstances of place, &c. the perfect and proper happiness of a soul, *to see God*, Mat. 5. 8. *to be like unto him*, 1 John 3. 2. to converse with the Father by the Son, as our Saviour hath told us, who best knew it, *John* 17. 3. *This is life eternal, to know thee*

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the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. By this it is that God dwells in the soul, and the soul in God (as we shall see hereafter) and the Kingdome of Heaven doth really enter into every Believer.

3. *The natural man is utterly unwilling and unable to converse with God.* An *earthly Mountain* may as soon rise up to Heaven by its own power and good will, as an *earthly mind*: And such minds are all natural and unregenerate. Sin, as I hinted before, is a falling from God, a sinking of the soul into self, whether *sensual* self, or *spiritual* self, and a shrivelling of it up into the creature, and the sinful soul is alwayes (like a shadow) moving upon the surface of the Earth, and higher it cannot get, *Rom.* 8. 5. Would you know what is the principal object of a natural mans admiration, inclination, and ambition? The Psalmist will tell you, It is some created good, *Psal.* 4. 6, 7. Will you know what is the disposition of the natural man towards the supreme and uncreated good? The Apostle will tell you, It is *Ignorance* and *Enmity*, 1 Cor. 2. 14. Rom. 8. 7. *The carnal mind is enmity against God.* This high duty of conversing with God in a right

manner

manner is beſides the temper of the wicked man: never any ſuch man did perform it. It is a contradiction: A wicked man converſing with God, is as if one ſhould ſay, An ungodly man that is godly. But that's not all; This duty is not only out of the *hands* of a wicked man, but out of his *reach* too, —— *Neither can he know him*, ſaith the Apoſtle to the *Corinthians*; and again to the *Romans*, —— *Neither can he be ſubject to him. Can two walk together, except they be agreed?* ſaith the Prophet. Can man *walk* with God, converſe with God, except he be reconciled to him? And what agreement, but by a Mediator? What Mediator between God and man but Chriſt Jeſus, who is a Mediator, as the Logicians call a *medium participationis*, who is God man? In the word, ſome converſe with one thing in a world, and ſome with another, as I noted before; but all converſe principally and mainly with the creature, that are not regenerated by Grace, reconciled by Chriſt.

4. *It is the duty of man in all ages of life, at all times, and in all places, and conditions, to converſe with God.* It is a neceſſary, natural, certain, conſtant duty, ſpringing up out of the very nature and natural will of God,

God, and out of the very nature and relation and capacity of the reasonable soul, binding *semper* and *ad semper*, as the Schoolmen speak, and admitting of no *dispensation* nor *diminution*. There is no time wherein it is not a duty, or wherein it is less a duty than at another time; however, we are apt to give to our selves many relaxations from it. The first *fruits*, nay, the very early *buds* of the tender soul, and of the springing faculties; these are due to God, and ought to be dedicated to him, *Eccles.* 12. 1. *Remember now thy Creator in the dayes of thy youth.* Manhood is not allowed so to attend unto cares and exploits, nor old age to pains and griefs, as to neglect converse with God: But whether young men build or plant, fight or study, or work, or marry, or manage the affairs of the house or of the field, all should be undertaken and carryed on in a way of converse and fellowship with God: or whether old men sit and muse and meditate, or lye under the pains and grievances of decrepit age, still it ought to be in the Lord. Neither doth this duty admit of interruption, no more than of cessation: There is no dispensation given us from this duty, as in no *age*, so in no *hour* of our life. As we cannot

cannot live a moment *out of God*, ſo neither ought we to live a moment *without*, *God* in the world. We ought continually ſo endeavour to walk in ſubſervience to and converſe with God, yea and as far as may be in a feeling converſe with him too. Holy *David* witneſſeth of himſelf that the fear of God was continually before his eyes, and that he did continually converſe with God; for ſo thoſe words may be underſtood, *Pſal.* 73. 23. *I am continually with thee.* The like is recorded of many other Saints both in the Old and New Teſtaments; concerning whom one may well ſay as the Queen of *Sheba* concerning the ſervants of *Solomon*, and with much better reaſon (1 *King.* 10. 8.) *Happy are theſe thy ſervants* (O Lord) *which ſtand continually before thee!* Neither is it the duty of ſome few men, that have the greateſt knowledge or the moſt leaſure. For it ſprings up out of the relation of a creature, and out of the very nature of the rational ſoul; ſo that no ſoul of man is exempted from it, however many ignorant and profane perſons live rather in a profeſſed independance upon God. Neither is it a duty only upon ſuppoſition of leaſure and freedom from worldly buſineſs,

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as ſome other things are, but is equally incumbent upon Prince and Peaſant, upon him that ſits in his cloſet, and upon him that ploughs in the field; yea they that go down unto the Sea in ſhips, ought to go up unto heaven in their hearts; and not only to converſe with the clouds (which they often do,) but above them too. A hand full of earth, and a heart full of heaven may well ſtand together: For as this duty juſtles out no honeſt buſineſs, ſo neither ſhould it ſelf be juſtled out by any. And as this high & excellent duty agrees to all ages and times and perſons, ſo it agrees to all conditions too: poor men do think that rich men may well do it, and rich men think that poor men had need to do it: proſperity thinks it hath better things to mind than a God; and adverſity knows it hath worſe things, but it muſt mind them: plenty is too full to entertain him, and poverty hath enough to do to bear up under its own burden: learning knows how, but will not; ignorance ſayes it would, but knows not how; but notwithſtanding all this ſhuffling, the obligation to this duty ceaſes not: None ſo high as to be above it, none ſo mean as to be below it: For rich and poor, high and low, learned and unlearned,

unlearned, Prince and peasant, though they are divided amongst themselves by punctilioes and lesser differences, yet they are united in one universal Being, meet in one and the same center, agree in the common capacity of reasonable creatures. As religion hath an interest and a concernment in the whole of the conversation, (according to that of the Apostle, *Phi.* 3. 20. *our conversation is in heaven*) so also hath it a room in the conversation of every man in every capacity: No Relation, Condition, Action, Change is exempted from the powerful influence thereof: so the Apostle describes himself, by his *living in all good conscience before God* all along, *Act.* 23. 1. and by his exercising himself in this thing, *to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men*, Act. 24. 16.

Now the fifth step in order, would be, that *It is more especially the duty of Gods people to study to converse with him aright in the way of his judgements*, which is the Doctrine it self, which I must not come to confirm, till I have shewed according to my promise in the second place, *what it is for the soul to converse with God, and how it comes to converse with him.*

Not to name those too low and improper notions that men ordinarily have of this high and spiritual matter, conversing with God, to speak properly of it, is *a complex Act of the soul, whereby it entertains God into it self, and renders it self back again to him*; receives impressions from him, and gives up it self again to him; is first filled with him, and then empties it self into him. You may conceive of it after the similitude of a Plant, that is influenc't by the benign beams of the Sun; and in those beams spreads it self, and in the virtue and power of them grows up towards Heaven: or after the similitude of a River, that is continually filled with the Ocean, and is continually emptying it self into the same, *εἰς τὸν ὠκεανὸν ῥεῖ καὶ εἰς τὸν ὠκεανὸν ἐκπίπτει*. This seems to be our Saviours elegant allusion, *Joh.* 4. 14. where he compares a divine and godly principle in the soul, to a *well of water* springing out from God, and continually boyling and bubling up towards him ——— *springing up into eternal life*. Or you may conceive of it after the similitude of a Glass, which receives the image of him that looks into it, and reflects the self same image that it receives. For indeed the brightness and beauty of holiness where-

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with a godly soul doth shine as a light in the world, is nothing but a reflection of that light and brightness wherewith the Father of lights shineth into it. And so the best of men have nothing of their own to glory in; for they behold God, but it is in his own light; they love him with a love which he hath shed abroad in their hearts; they are therefore like him, because he hath stampt his own image upon them: And so they must needs acknowledge concerning all their acts of love, and communion, and delight; as *David* did in another case, *Of thine own we offer unto thee.* This is indeed the true and noble converse and communion with God, wherein the life of a godly man is infinitely advanced above the life of all other men, and indeed doth nearly resemble the life of Angels: Their life is described in the Holy Scriptures, by a *seeing of God*, a *beholding of him face to face*; which we must not understand of a naked idle speculation, but of a real assimilation arising from the divine impressions made upon them; a beholding of him so as to be changed into his image. And such is a godly mans life, spiritual life, his life of converse with God, consisting in a participation of God, and of his Grace, and a holy

reciprocation or reflection of affections to him; which are indeed two distinct acts, though originally springing from the same fountain; for the love wherewith the soul loves God, is it self an efflux from him: For by loving us, he inspires a love into us, and by influences from God we become God-like. But this converse with God is not only by the impressions of goodness from God, and the reflections of love and delight towards him; but is also seen in the various acts of the soul, according to the various impressions which God maketh upon the soul, and suitable to the various occasions of life; so we converse with God by acts of fear, reverence, joy, confidence, self-resignation, and the like.

Now, because we are in the body, and so cannot converse with God so purely, spiritually and immediately, as the Angels in Heaven do, therefore it hath pleased God to appoint unto man wayes and means of conversing with him, wherein he hath promised to communicate himself to the soul, and so to draw forth reciprocal acts of communion, acts of love, fear, reverence, confidence, resignation, dependance, and delight out of the same soul towards himself. Now these wayes or means may be

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reduced to three heads, *Duties*, *Ordinances*, and *Providences*; though indeed the two first might be contracted into one. Briefly I will speak a word or two of *Ordinances*, such as the Word and Sacraments, for I shall name no more but those two. The Preaching of the Word is a way in which God doth usually meet the soul, to communicate *Life*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 23. *Light*, *Psal.* 19. 8. *Warmth*, *Luke* 24. 32. *Growth*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 2. And the soul doth answer these impressions, *as in the water face answereth face*, by the acts of *Faith*, *Love*, *Joy*, *Meekness*, and holy *Resolution*. So also the administration of the Sacraments is a way wherein God meeteth the soul, and communicateth his *Love*, *Sweetness*, *Fulness*, *Goodness*, *Strength* and *Vigour* to the soul; and it reflects upon him in the acts of holy *complacency* and *delight*, *chearfulness*, *thankfulness* and *dependence*.

Secondly, *Duties*, these are also ways of converse with God; such as *Confession*, *Petition*, *Thanksgiving*, *Conference*, *Singing*, *Meditation*, *Observation*. In all which God impresseth something of himself upon the soul, and draws answerable affections of the soul unto himself, as might appear in the particular explication of them, but

that would be too much a digression. Only I will here note by the way, the mistake of many low-spirited Christians, who know no other converse with God, than the bare performance of these things; this they count the very top-stone of a Christians perfections, the very flower of the spiritual life. But alas, this is a gross mistake! There is sure something more sweet, savoury, satisfactory in the spiritual life, than the dry duty: there is marrow in the bone, or else a holy soul could not covet it with so much fervour. Converse with God in duties, is a spiritual, savoury, filling enjoyment, distinct from the duties themselves: This must needs be, except we will allow to wicked and hypocritical men the same dainties, that the most sanctified souls do feed upon, and say, That the childrens bread is common to the Dogs, as well as them. The soul doth not converse with God in duties barely when it prayes, or meditates; for even godly souls themselves do many times find little converse with God in these, *viz.* when he suspends the influences of his graces, or their hearts are clogg'd or cloy'd with earthly objects, or otherwise indisposed and shut up against him: It is not speaking to God that brings

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the soul really nigh unto him, nor bare thinking of God that advances the soul into the excellent state of feeling converse with him. Even prayer it self may prove many times an empty sound, *vox & praeterea nihil*; and meditation, that most excellent and genuine off-spring of the soul, may prove a poor dry and sapless speculation. It is not enough to set up the sayls, but there must also be wind to fill them. But then doth the soul converse with God in duties, when the dark places thereof become filled with his divine light, and the empty places thereof filled with his divine love, and the low and languishing affections thereof are ravished and revived with the powerful insinuations of his Almighty Grace: when God draws, and the soul runs; he puts in his finger by the hole of the door, and the very bowels of the soul are moved for him, as it is described, *Cant.* 5. 4. Then doth the soul converse with God in meditation and prayer, when the Spirit of God moves upon the face of the waters, when he kisses it with the kisses of his mouth; and the shaking soul finds it self marvelously settled, the doubting soul established, the frozen heart thawed, the benumm'd affections warmed, the scant

and contracted capacity of it enlarged, and wonderfully widened, and its slow and sluggish motions quickened into a lively and cheerful compliance with, and pursuit of the supreme and self-sufficient good: when the soul finds its legs to run after that glorious object which is presented to it, lifts up its hands to lay hold upon the strength, the fulness, the faithfulness, the Christ of God, and bearing up it self upon the wings of faith and love, flyes out to seek its rest and happiness; and no longer envyes the birds of the Altar, for it self enters into the *Holy* of *Holies*, and thorough the *arms* of its Mediator, throws it self into the very *heart* of God. In a word, and that shall be the Word of God, then doth a soul converse with God in duties, when with *open face beholding the glory of God*, it doth not only admire it, but it self is *changed into the same image from glory to glory*, *viz.* from grace to grace, 2 *Cor.* 3. *ult.*

Thirdly, *Providences*: These are another way wherein the soul converses with God. Now by Providences, we mean in general, *the whole work of God in governing the world, and all things therein*. And so indeed a religious enlarged soul, a mind freed from particular pinching Cares, low

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and selfish ends, converses with God in beholding and observing Gods setled course of governing the world. The whole Heavens, Earth, and Sea, and the admirable order kept up in them, do teach the knowledge of God, and draw up the contemplative soul into an observation and admiration of him in them; and the pious soul longs to find some impressions made upon it self by all these, and to be affected with God therein; It is not content with a bare speculation, but its meditation of God in these is *sweet* to it, as *Davids* were, *Psal.* 104.34. Particularly, Gods *Providence towards mankind*, as it doth most lively express his infinite love, justice and wisdom, so we ought to converse with him therein, and in all the changes of any kind that befall man in the world, that befall all the Kingdoms of the world, the four great Monarchies of it, and all other subordinate Dominions; more especially in all the mutations that befall the Church of God in the world, and all men of all sects and sorts therein, but most especially our selves. Labour to converse with that infinite mind, wisdom and understanding that ordains and orders all the changes that befall your selves. Now our conversing with

God

God in the several changes that befall us in the world, is in general by endeavouring to serve the Providence of God in every change. The Providence of God *serves it self* even upon wicked men, and upon all creatures that do least understand it; but a godly man only knows how to *serve the Providence of God* in the things that befall him: He hath no private selfish interest of his own, but counts it his interest chearfully and faithfully to serve the will of God, to be what God would have him be, to be without that which God would have him to want, and to do what God would have him do. Every wicked soul in the world sets up some trade for himself, and drives on some particular self-interest distinct from God: But a godly soul counts it his greatest honour and happiness to be nothing in himself, nor for himself, but is wholly at the beck of his Creator, and looking upon all his interest as being bound up in God, is sollicitous for nothing else but to serve the will of God in his generation: So the life of holy *David* is described, *Act.* 13. 36. *David in his generation having served the will of God*, i. e. the Providence of God, say the *Dutch Annotat.* translating the words in this order. A good man eying nothing

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but the great and blessed God in the world, and knowing that he was not made for himself, but for a higher good, is only ambitious to be subservient to that Infinite and Soveraign Being, herein imitating his Blessed Saviour, who lived not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him, *Joh.* 6. 38. and again, to seek the glory of him that sent him, *John* 7. 18. In a word, he looks upon himself, not as in himself, but in God, and labours to become ὅλως τῷ Θεῷ, wholly Gods, and to live in the world only as an instrument in the hands of him that worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will. That in general, for the conversing with God in all kind of changes in general. Now these changes are reduced to two heads, Prosperity and Adversity. In the first of these it is our duty to converse with God, and not with the creature-comforts which we do enjoy from him, as one might shew at large. But I am to speak of the latter, and to shew how we ought to converse with God in that: But first I must demonstrate, that it is our duty to do it, which was the third thing I promised, *viz. To shew that it is the duty of Gods people to study to converse with him aright in the way of his*

Judgments

Judgements, in a time of affliction. And here, I hope, I need not be at pains to prove by Scripture, that besides the general business of a Christians life, some particular and more especial behaviours are required of him in an afflicted state; all will grant it sure: Besides, by that time I shall have declared *what* they are, I shall not need to prove *that* they are. Therefore for the present I shall content my self to give in three or four Reasons of it, and so pass on. It is especially the duty of Gods people to study to converse with him aright in the time of afflictions.

1. Because *then especially it is hard to do it*: We are then very apt to be taken off from it, therefore we should then especially labour to pursue it, and perform it: We are then in eminent danger to be taken off from it; and that by these means.

1. *Our senses do set us on work to converse with outward means*, which, whilst we attend upon too eagerly, we neglect and forget God. This might appear by an induction of particular afflictions; but that would be too long. I will only instance in one or two for explication. The sickness and painedness of the body, calls out the mind to seek after, and converse with Physicians;

ficians, bodily wants call us to seek after bodily supplies, and so all kind of distresses call out the soul to seek creature-relief. Call upon the sick and languishing Patient to call upon, and hang upon divine help, to converse with God: alas, he hath enough to do to attend upon his pains and pangs; tell him of ease, of recovery, and he can hearken to you, for that's the news that he longs to hear. Call upon the poor pined beggar to seek relief of God, to converse with him: Alas, he finds such a faintness in his limbs, such a gnawing of hunger, such a restless appetite within himself, that he can groan out nothing, but *Oh that one would give me bread to eat!* In a word, the soul is more naturally addicted to mind its body to which it is joyned, than the God that joyned it to that body. Hence you may observe two things by the way, *viz.* 1. The reason why so few persons repent in time of sickness, the sense of sickness drowns the sense of sin. 2. The reason why so few poor people who are evermore conflicting with the necessities of the body, do not at all mind the concernments of their souls: The exigencies and straits of the body, do cry louder in their hearts than all the words and works of God.

So

So that as health is the best time for repentance, so it seemeth that the best way to *teach* the poor, is to *relieve* them.

2. *The corruptions of the heart are then most apt to make war against Heaven.* This is the opinion of him who knows the temper of man too well, *Job* 1. 11. *Put forth thine hand against him, and he will curse thee to thy face.* And I am perswaded that the Devil acts much by this observation; which makes him endeavour all he can to make many good men poor, thinking thereby to make them less good: though the wise and merciful God do wonderfully prevent him. For indeed the soul is so naturally tender of the body, that its loth God himself should touch it; if he do, it is ready to fret and storm, and flye in his face. Converse with God! saith the wicked King, *Why this evil is from the Lord, what should I wait upon the Lord any longer!* 2 King. 6. 33. There are many corruptions of the soul that are most ready to clamour against God in a time of affliction, as *Fear*, *Anger*, *Unbelief*, yea and sinful *Self-love* and *Creature-love*, an affection than can never be taught to converse with God, yet will go crying after him, when he takes away any darling from

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it, as *Phaltiel* went crying after his Wife, or rather, crying against him, as *Micah* cryed against the men of *Dan*, saying, *Ye have taken away my Gods, and are gone away, and what have I more?* Judg. 18. 24.

3. Temptations do then come strongest from without. Then it is the Devils time to play his game: What, put up this reproach! what, will you sit down with this loss! up and revenge thy self. He that knows so well the temper of mans heart so ready *to curse God when he touches him*, Job 2. 5. will not fail *to touch* the heart, and tempt it *to curse him* indeed, Job 2. 9. —— *Curse God and dye.*

I have gone thorow the Doctrinal part of my discourse upon these words, which was the thing I mainly intended. Many Inferences might be drawn from it. But I shall content my self to forbid, and so as it were to remove out of the way, some things that hinder this great duty; and so shut up all with one word of Exhortation.

1. *Converse not with creature-comforts*, the poor, low, and scant enjoyments of this world: For so I may well call them, though they be never so *high* in the *opinion* of them that have them, and never so *large* as to the

the *proportion* that any one hath of them: They are low in comparison of that high and supreme good for which the soul was made; and scant at to any real happiness or satisfaction that they can possibly give. For indeed those sinful and sensual souls that take up their rest and happiness most in them, are not properly satisfied, but surfeited; not filled, but for the present glutted with them. There are many unlawful, and hurtful wayes of the souls conversing with created comforts: I will not run thorow them all, as not intending any large discourse upon these heads. Converse not with them, fondly delighting in them, and doating upon them; especially take heed of this when God is shaking his Rod over any of them. Doth God arise and begin to plead with you in judgment, laying his hand upon any of these, and threatning to take them from you? Oh then *hands off!* touch them not. What an unseemly, and indeed monstrous sight is it to see a creature pulling & tugging against his Creator & maintaining his supposed right against Heaven its self! Is it for a Heaven-born soul to stand gazing and doating upon, or passionately weeping over created friends, carnal liberty, corporal health, houses made

with

with hands; things below God, yea and below its self too! Pore not too much upon them; value them only in God, and refer them freely to him. If you can say, you have any thing of your own, make much of it, and spare not: But give unto God the things that are Gods; and by that time you have done so, I think you need not dote upon what's left. We ought indeed at all times to enjoy all our creature-comforts with hearts loosened from them: but if formerly our hearts have been too much joyned to them, it is time now to loosen them.

2. Converse not with creature-causes in a time of Affliction. This is a strange kind of Atheistical temper, into which we are very prone to fall: I speak properly, when I say [Fall;] for it is indeed a falling down from God in our hearts, in whose Infinite Essence all creature-causes are lapt up; and in whose hand the several successes and events of them all do lie. Let a beast that judges by sense, kick at the poor thorn that pricks him: But let rational souls fix upon the highest and supreme Agent, who in an infinite, powerful and skilful manner, uses what creature he will, for what end he will, and sends it of

an errand which it self knows not. Why do we run hunting Poor Partridge-instruments upon the mountains of contemplation? Shall the noble faculties of an immortal soul spend themselves upon such an inquisition? or is it just to pursue an innocent creature out of breath for being an instrument in the hand of God; to quarrel with the Sword, because it suffered its self to be drawn; or beat the Air, because it is infected? This were indeed to go out with the King of *Israel*, with much warlike preparation, to catch Fleas. I deny not but that wise men may look into second causes, and make many profitable Observations from them, both for present, and future; and all men may and ought to learn many wholesome lessons even from the instrument that afflicts them: But sure I am, a godly man will not dwell upon these; he will not fix here, but readily resolve all into an higher cause, and so falls to converse with that. Much less will he blame or murmure at a poor harmless Arrow, that flew no further than it was shot, nor pierced no deeper than it was bidden. Yea, though the second cause were a sinful cause, a rational Agent, and so consequently acted by malicious and evil principles; yet a godly

soul

soul knows how to distinguish upon him, and his action: he hates him as a sinner, but comports well enough with him as Gods instrument: and though he condemns his action as it varies from Gods command, yet he approves of it as being ordered by Gods hand and counsel. *David* hated cursing as much as any man; yet did he so eye the hand of God in every thing, and comply with it too, that there was a time when he said concerning *Shimei*, *So let him curse*. Concerning this I hinted something before under another head. Therefore

3. Converse not with *creature eyes*, *creature-relief*. These may indeed be look't out after, and lafely made use of when they are found: Nay, I will add further, that they are to be sought diligently, and used carefully. They that know the Infinite Soveraignty, Power and Wisdom of God, will not tye him to means, much less to these or those particular means: But on the other hand, they that understand Gods usual and ordinate way of acting and governing, and upholding the world, will not tye him up from means; no, nor expect that he should appear for their relief immediately and miraculously. Though if any one have a miraculous faith truly

grounded upon ſome ſpecial and particular Promiſe, I will not contend with him: only I would deſire to ſee his miraculous faith juſtified by ſome miraculous works, which I conceive do always attend it. But the converſe with creature-cures which I forbid, is the immoderate ſeeking of them, or the inordinate uſing of them. To ſeek after means in themſelves unlawful, can never become lawful: But I ſpeak not of theſe. For, although ſome are come to that height of Atheiſm and abjuration of God, as to retain the Devil himſelf for counſelſ in a time of ſtraits, as *Saul* did; and contract with the Prince of death for the preſervation of life in time of ſickneſs, as *Ahaziah* did: And I doubt very many do fall into acquaintance with that evil ſpirit, and receive aſſiſtance from him before they be well aware, by medling with unphyſical, unſcriptural, unwarrantable cures; yet the greateſt danger is not in theſe: *in dicit is perimus omnes*, the greateſt danger is of miſcarrying about things in themſelves lawful. And that is chiefly by thoſe two wayes which I named but now. Take heed therefore of immoderate ſeeking after created helps. Be not anxious, perplexed, tormented in mind by a paſſionate

sionate desire of any of these. Oh! what a raging and unquenchable thirst have many men after creature-cures! They will move Heaven and Earth, and almost Hell too (with Het in the Poet) but they will find out relief. Give me a Physician, or I dye, sayes one; Give me trading, good Markets, a plentiful Crop, or I am undone, sayes another. What man, is thy life tapt up in a pill, or incorporated into a potion? Is thy main hap in els in the abundance of these things here below? or wilt thou lay to the wind, Blow here in this quarter, and nowhere else, tye up the supreme and free Agent to a form and method of working? Let not such a prophane dispositon be found amongst us. Again, if you have found our hopeful creature-cures, take heed of using them in an inordinate manner, laying stress upon them, *looking earnestly on them*, as though they by their *own power and proper virtue* could make the same to work, or the sick to recover. Eye not, much less depend upon the vertue of any created means as distinct from God. But acknowledge the power and virtue, and goodness of every created Being, to be the power, and virtue, and goodness of God in that creature; and so

conſequently uſe it in ſubordination and ſubſerviency to the ſupreme cauſe, who can at pleaſure let looſe or ſuſpend the influences and virtues of every ſuch means.

4. Converſe not with *creature-loſſes* in a time of affliction. The ſinful ſoul that hath ſtraggled off from God, and centred upon the creature, is alwaies intemperate and reſtleſs: If it be diſappointed in its converſe with creature-cures, and ſees that for all theſe, his comforts are cut off, health, liberty, friends, are periſhed; then he falls to converſe with his loſſes, and ſpends the powers of his ſoul in diſcontents, complaints, and many diſmal paſſions. Oh then, alas, I am undone! *What ſhall I do for the hundred talents!* I am the only *man that hath ſeen affliction*; *no ſorrow like unto my ſorrow*: I ſhall go ſoft[illegible] all my dayes, for the *joy of my heart* is periſhed, the delight of my eyes is cut off. Thus *Rachel* weeps for her children, and will not be comforted: *Rizpah* attends the carkaſſes of her Sons, and will not be parted from them, 2 *Sam.* 21. It is a ſtrange thing that a ſoul ſhould live upon its loſſes; And yet how many do ſo! Their very ſoul cleaveth to the duſt, where their creature-comforts are interred; whoſe ſouls are ſo much

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bound up in the creature, that they will needs live and dye together with them. If God smite the Gourd, and make it to wither, *Jonah* droops, and will needs dye too, *Jonah* 4. 8, 9. If *Joseph* be missing a while, *Jacob* will not be comforted, no, he will go down into the grave unto his Son mourning, *Gen.* 37. 35. Who would have thought to have heard such words, from such wise men, as a Prophet and a Patriach! Oh, the strange and unbounded power which this unseemly creature-love hath obtained over the best of men! which makes me call him a happy man, almost more than a man, a compeer of Angels, who hath learnt to converse with God alone. Well, converse not with creature-losses, let not your soul take up its lodging by the carkasses of your created-comforts, with *Rizpah*, dwell not upon the lowest round of the ladder, but climb up by it to the meaning of God, and to some higher good, and more excellent attainment. They live to their idols, who live upon their losses, who dwell upon the dark side of the dispensation. For every dark Providence hath one bright side, wherein a godly soul may take comfort, if he be not wanting to himself.

5. Converse not with *flesh and blood.* By flesh and blood, I suppose the Apostle means no more than men, *Gal.* 1. 16. And indeed, if we confer with men only for counsel, and repair to men only for comfort in a time of affliction, we shoot short of the mark. But by flesh and blood the Scripture elsewhere often means, man in this his animal state, as he is in his corruptible, mortal body; as *1 Cor.* 15. 50. and many other places. And in this sense I speak, when I say, Converse not with flesh and blood. Judge not according to your senses; let not your own sensual appetite determine what is good or evil, sweet or bitter: Consult with rectified Reason, and not with brutish appetite; confer with Faith, and not with Fancy. Rectified Reason will judge that to be really good, which our sensual appetite distasts: An enlightened mind will judge that to make for the interest of the soul, and its eternal *happy state*, which sense judges hurtful to the interest of the body, and its *animal state*. It is not possible there should be any order, nor consequently any peace or rest in that soul, where the inferiour faculties domineer over the superior, and sensitive powers Lord it over the intellectual; and where raging appetite,

and

and extravagant fancy must clamber up into the throne to determine cases, and right Reason must stoop and bow before it.

Be admonished to fly converse with all these, if you would converse rightly, purely, properly, comfortably with God, which is the highest office and attainment of created nature. Consider what I have said concerning this excellent and high employment; and awaken your souls, and all the powers of them to meet the Lord God, and converse with him aright in the way of his judgments. Converse with God, with God in Christ, with God in his promises, with God in his attributes, and labour to do it not speculatively, notionally, but really, practically, according as I have directed in the foregoing discourse. Religion is not an empty, airy, notional thing; it is not a matter of thinking, nor of talking; but it hath a real existence in the soul, and doth as really distinguish, though not specifically, one man from another, as Reason distinguishes all men from beasts: Converse with God is set out in Scripture, by *living*, and *walking*, and the like. Let me inculcate this thing therefore again, and press it upon you, and I shall finish all. As the way of glorifying God in the world, is not by a meer

meer thinking of him, or entertaining some notion of his glory into our heads, but consists in a real participation of his image, in a God-like disposition, and holy conversation, according to that of our Saviour, *Joh.* 15. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, &c.* So the way of conversing with God in his several attributes, is not a thinking often with our selves, and telling one another that God is just, wise, merciful, &c. though this be good: But it is a drinking in the virtue and value of these divine perfections, a working of them into the soul; and on the other hand, the souls rendring of it self up to God in those acts of Grace which do suit with such attributes, as in water, face answereth face. I do not call bare performance of duties a conversing with God: Prayer and Meditation, &c. are excellent means in and by which our soul converses with God; but communion with God is properly somewhat more spiritual, real, powerful and divine, according as I described it just now. As for example; The soul receives the impressions of divine *Sovereignty* into it, and gives up it self unto God in the Grace of *Self-denyal*, and humble subjection. The soul receives the communications of divine *Fulness* and Perfection,

fection, and entertains the same with *Delight* and *Complacency*; and, as it were, grows full in it. Even as the communications of the virtues of the Sun are answered with life, and warmth, and growth in the plants of the earth: So a souls conversing with the attributes of God, is not an empty notion of them, or a dry discourse concerning them, but a *Reception of Impressions* from them, and a *Reciprocation* to them: The effluxes of these from God, are such as do beget reflections in man towards God. This is to know Christ, to grow up in him into all things according to that in *1 John* 3. 6. Whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him.

The second Reason why we ought especially to study to converse with God in the time of afflictions, is because *that is a time wherein we are most apt to think our selves exempted from this duty*, as if it were allowed us in our extremity to forget God, and mind our selves only. And that not only in respect of those bodily straits and distresses, which I named under the last head, but in respect of our own passions. When the afflicting hand of God is upon us, pressing and grieving of us, and taking our beloved comforts from us, we are apt to indulge

indulge our own private and selfish passions, care, fear, sorrow, complainings, &c. Yea, to think we are in some sense allowed to indulge them. How willingly do we suffer our selves to be drawn into a converse with our selves, to be contracted as it were into our selves, and suffer our selves to be carryed down the stream of our own passions, which at other times we should think it were our duty to resist? Even as the heart in naturals draws home to it in a time of danger, the blood that was dispersed abroad in the body, as it were to defend it self: so the heart in morals gathers home its powers and affections which were formerly bestowed here and there, to employ them all about it self in a time of sore affliction. And we are apt to think our selves excusable too in so doing: So that if God himself should ask a distressed soul, as he did *Jonah*, *Dost thou well to be careful, fearful, sorrowful, querulous*, because of these afflictions, losses, distresses that are upon thee? it would go nigh to give him the same answer, *I do well* to be sorrowful, yea, and to refuse to be comforted. There seems to be allowed us some natural affections in case of extreme affliction; which, how far they are lawful,

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I will not now dispute. But sure I am, that if such be allowed us, they must not be wild extravagants, wandring without the bounds of Religion, and Conscience, as if God had layd the reins upon the neck of the soul, and given it leave to indulge it self in what passions it would for a certain time, as the Daughter of *Jephtha* was allowed to go whither she would, wailing upon the mountains for two months. We are never allowed any passions or affections sure, that do not comply with the will of God, and consist with our submission thereunto. But whatever they are, I find, that under the pretence of those, some men are apt to be carryed unto strange inordinacies, and commit many passionate outrages; and indeed the best of men are too prone to suspend and interrupt that lively and feeling converse with God, which they ought to maintain even when they smart most.

3. *Because this is a time when there is more especial use for, and need of such converse with God.* And that (1) *To give rest to the soul.* In prosperity men forget God, and yet make a shift to find some kind of rest in their pleasures, friends, employments; some take comfort in their

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cups and companions; and indeed all are apt to fancy a contentment in creature-enjoyments. But in a time of great affliction, all these are gone, or at least have no savour in them; and where shall the weary soul find rest then? Then there's no shew of rest but in God alone. When all other props fail, then either catch God here, or fall. There is now nothing left to give any settlement or contentment to the soul but God alone: And in him there is ease to the sick, rest to the weary, settlement to the shaking, contentment to the troubled Christian. Therefore converse with God in the day of greatest affliction; which is the same counsel in effect with that of our Saviour, *Mat.* 11. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* (2.) There is need of it, *to give relief to the body also.*

And so conversing with God in a right manner, is the best policy, the surest way to recovery, and relief. See what a speedy cure there is in it; *Psal.* 34. 5, 6. *They looked unto him and were lightned, and their faces were not ashamed; This poor man cryed, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.* In vain is conversing with Friends, Physicians, Counsellors; in vain

vain is all creature-converſe without this: No reſt to the ſoul, no eaſe to the body in a time of affliction, without converſe with God; ſo that a man in affliction eſtranged from God, ſtragling off from God, is altogether miſerable. In a word, ſeparate a ſoul from God, and in proſperity his enjoyments are low, and in adverſity the want of them is very bitter: ſo that there is good reaſon why a Chriſtian ſhould ſtudy to converſe with God in the way of his Judgments. —— But the great Art is to know how. This therefore I now come to in the

Fourth place, to ſhew particularly, *how we are to converſe with God in afflictions.* Now there are two wayes of explaining this.

1. By ſhewing with what Attributes of God we are to converſe.

2. By what acts of the ſoul. But I ſhall bring both theſe into one.

1. We ought to converſe with the *abſolute and unlimited Soveraignty* of God, whereby he, as a free and ſupreme Agent, doth what he will, and none can ſay unto him, *What doſt thou?* Dan. 4. 35. This *Job* often eyes and owns: Particularly, *Job* 9. 12. *He taketh away, none can hinder him, and*

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who can say unto him, What dost thou? This we must also eye often, and own heartily. This we may well argue from Gods creating of us: He that made us thus without any *constraint*, can he not, may he not make us otherwise, and alter us without *restraint?* So *Job* argues, *chap.* 1. 21. We may also argue it from the subordinate Soveraignty, and inferiour Supremacy of men: Even a Monarch among men doth whatsoever he pleaseth, and who may say unto him, What dost thou? *Eccles.* 8. 3, 4. Yea, a very *Centurion* hath a kind of Soveraignty in his sphere, over as many as are under him; he saith unto one man *Go, and he goeth*; and to another, *Do this, and he doeth it*, Mat. 8. 9. And shall we not then acknowledge a Soveraign Power, and independant absolute Authority in the great and blessed God, over the whole Creation, the workmanship of his own hands? So the good Centurion argues, and infers, in the place last quoted. Nay, as the Apostle saith in one place, *We have Fathers of our flesh* who use us at their pleasure and we do not gainsay their Authority; we do not say to our Father, *What begettest thou?* nor to our Mother, *What hast thou brought forth?* Isa. 45. 10. Nay, if these similitudes will

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not teach you, I will say to you, as God to the Prophet, *Arise, go down to the Potters house*, there I will cause you to learn this lesson: He maketh and marreth his vessels of Clay, as oft as he pleaseth; And, are not ye in the hand of the Lord, as the Clay is in the hand of the Potter? *Jer.* 18. 6. I speak the more to this, in as much as I find, that however men give God good words, and confess his Dominion over them and theirs, yet when it comes to it, that he touches them in any of their darling comforts, they are ready to clamour against him in their hearts, as if he did them some wrong; if not to curse him to his face. Certainly there is some Atheistical opinion of propriety, that in some degree or other is apt to steal into the most devout minds: And sure I am, we do not only barely offend, but we do our selves much hurt; we wound our own peace, we shake the settledness of our own hearts; we put our selves into briars: In a word, we both lessen our creature-comforts, and multiply our griefs, and aggravate our sorrows, by calling things our own: If we had not taken them to be our own, it would not have troubled us to part with them.

Be sure therefore to eye and own the

absolute and unlimited Soveraignty of God: But that's not all; it is not enough to believe it, we must converse with it otherwise than by thinking of it or assenting to it. Then do we converse with the Soveraignty of God,

1. *When the powerful sense of it doth silence quarrelling, yea murmurings, yea even disputings in the soul.* We may indeed modestly contend with men concerning their dealings with us; the *Potsheard* may *strive with the Potsheards of the earth*; but it must not say to the *Potter*, Why hast thou made me thus? A pacate and quiet frame of heart, is a real conversing with the Soveraignty of God. So did *Aaron* when he held his peace, *Levit.* 10. 3. and *Job*, when he *attributed nothing unseemly to God*, Job 1. *ult.*

2. *When the sense of it doth suppress self-will.* This is an unruly lust in the soul, αὐθαδὴς ψυχὴ, a Giant-like spirit warring against Heaven, and breeding bate continually. This is that which maintains a *Meum* and *Tuum* even with God himself, that sets up interests (as the Jews set up Princes, *Hosea* 8. 4.) but not by God, yea indeed in opposition to him. This is the seditious party in the soul, that is alwayes crying

crying out, We will not have this man to rule over us: And when that darling interest which this proud rival hath set up, is touched of God, and smitten and blasted from Heaven, it is ready to fret and storm, yea, and to think it hath reason to be angry. If this Son of the bondwoman were cast out, *Abraham*'s Family would be all of a peece, all in order, and at rest. If this undisciplin'd and perverse spirit were quite banished; Oh what a calm day would it be in the soul! what fair and sweet correspondence would there be between God and his creature? for certainly this is the *Jonah* that raises the storm, and makes the great deeps of the soul that they cannot rest, but do perpetually roll and toss, yea and cast out mire and dirt continually. But alas, I doubt this spirit is not quite layd, no not in the most spiritual man: the best of men are ready to nourish and hatch up some darling, some private interest or other of their own, distinct from God, and the grand interest of their souls, which God himself must not touch; some Gourd or other that the cold wind must not blow upon. He is a blessed man indeed, who doth so understand that he lives and moves in God alone; and is so overpowered with

the ſenſe of the infinite goodneſs and holineſs of God, and the abſolute perfection of his divine will, as that he reckons it his greateſt perfection to be nothing in himſelf, nor have nothing of his own diſtinct from God, but only ſtudyes to be great in God, to be filled with God, to live to him, and for him; to enjoy all things as in and under him; who counts it his *only intereſt* to quit all *ſelf intereſt*, and particular ends, and to be freely at the diſpoſal of the higheſt mind, conformable to the higheſt good, chearfully compliant with the uncreated will. *Potiphar* had ſo committed all to *Joſeph*, in the ſenſe of his great faithfulneſs, that he knew not ought he had, *ſave the bread that he did eat*, *Gen.* 39. 6. But this ſimilitude is too low: A godly ſoul ſhould commit all its intereſt, its life and livelihood, and all to God in the ſenſe of his Soveraignty, and not know ought that he hath, no not his own life, but deſpiſe it in compariſon of uncreated life; as *Job* ſpeaks, *Job* 9. 21. Methinks the Soveraignty of God ſpeaks ſuch language to the ſoul, and in it, as *Eli* to *Samuel*, *My Son*, *hide nothing from me*, *keep nothing back of all that thou haſt*, and the pious ſoul ſhould not, with fooliſh *Rachel*, conceal any ſelfiſh

intereſt,

interest, so as not to be willing to part with it, when its Soveraign Lord and Father comes to search the tent; but (with allusion to *Amos* 6. 10.) when God comes to ferret out all self-interests, and shall ask, *Is there any such yet with thee?* should be able to answer boldly, *No*, there is none. Blessed is the man that is in such a case; blessed is the man whose only interest it is to serve the will of the Lord! Well, improve the Infinite Soveraignty of God to this end, and work it upon, and into your own hearts, that all self-will may stoop to it: and let the main interest of your souls, be so planted and established in your souls, that no other interest may be able to grow by it. Charm your own self-will with such severe reproofs, as this is, Either *deny thy self*, O my soul, or *deny thy self to be a creature*: either be wholly at Gods command, or call him not thy Soveraign.

3. *When the sense of it doth beget Reverence in the soul towards God.* We ought not only to be subject to the Rod of God, but even to reverence him when he corrects us with it: and so not only to *accept* of the Rod, but to *kiss* it too. And surely if the Fathers of our flesh correct us, and we give

them Reverence, Heb. 12. 9. much more ought we to reverence the Soveraign Father both of flesh and spirit. This is a devout act of the soul, whereby it looks up and adores the Infinite and Soveraign Majesty, and thinks equitable and honourable thoughts of him, even when he is in the way of his Judgments. And these are the proper acts of a soul conversing with Gods Soveraignty in the time of afflictions. When we are silent before him, subject unto him, and reverencing of him; then do we really and truly converse with him as our Almighty and absolute Soveraign. But Gods Authority and Prerogative, though it may silence, will scarce satisfie such a corrupt and rebellious pals are our natures grown to. Therefore

2. Converse with the *perfect and infinite Righteousness of God* in the time of afflictions; that divine perfection whereby he renders to every man what is just and due, and no more. This we are to eye and own, and sincerely to acknowledge, even in the time of our greatest extremity, after the example of *Daniel*, chap. 9. 14. *The Lord our God is righteous in all his works*; and of the godly *Levites*, Neh. 9. 33. *Thou art just in all that is brought upon us, thou hast*

hast done right. Argue with *Abraham*, *Gen.* 18. 25. *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* Can Righteousnes it self erre in Judgment? Shall the *Timber* say unto the *Rule*, Why hast thou measured mee thus, or to the Line thou art crooked? *Are not my wayes equall? saith the Lord*; Ezek. 18. 25. Are not the Lords wayes equall? let your souls say too. Be ye firmly perswaded of the infinite and incorruptible Righteousnes and Equity of God; but that's not all; we do not then converse with the Righteousnes of God, when we do believe it, or acknowledge it; every *Pharaoh* may be brought to make such a confession, *Exod.* 9. 27. *The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.* But then do we converse with the Righteousnes of God, in general, *when the sense of it doth give a rational satisfaction to the soul.* And indeed, whereas the Soveraignty of God is enough to silence, yea its Righteousnes had need to be called in to administer satisfaction: The former is sufficient to *stop the mouth*, but there is need of the latter to *settle the heart*. And indeed, methinks it is a heart-settling consideration, For, how can the interest of the creature be better secured than in the

hands of a righteous God? Where can we venture all we have, better than in such a certain and steady bottom? How can we better trust our selves, than on such firm and even ground? We will trust our selves far with an upright and righteous man: and if we hear of the miscarriage of any interest of ours at any time, it doth mightily calm and satisfie our hearts, if we are assured that it was in the hands of a just and upright person: Much more rational and steady satisfaction may the Infinite Righteousness of God administer even in the time of the greatest affliction, if it be duly wrought into the heart. But more particularly,

1. *The powerful sense of the Righteousness of God should make us sensible and serious.* It becomes us seriously to ponder, duly to weigh, and in good earnest to lay to heart, all that is done to us by a righteous God. We use slightly to pass by, and slightly to esteem the words or actions of vain man: But it is not for nothing that the righteous God afflicts any man, in any measure, at any time. The voice of God, though it be not alwayes *articulate*, yet is alwayes *significant*. *Will a Lion roar for nothing?* Surely every action of the

righteous

righteous God hath a meaning in it. A hair falls not from our head, nor a Sparrow to the ground without him: Much leſs ſure do greater changes befall us without him. And in all things he is infinitely righteous. Oh how doth this call us to ſenſibleneſs and ſerioufneſs! How ought all the powers of the ſoul to be awakened to attention, when the righteous God utters his dreadful voice! and the whole frame of the heart and life to be compoſed under his heavy hand! Now if ever, one would *ſay of Laughter, It is mad*: one would reckon trifling to be a kind of prophaneneſs, and judge that looſiſh jeſtings do almoſt border upon blaſphemy, formerly not convenient, now not lawful. For indeed a vain frothy, light, trifling ſpirit, in the day of affliction, is in a ſenſe a blaſpheming of the Righteouſneſs of God. As a conſequent of this,

2. *It ſhould put us upon ſelf examination.* Nature it ſelf had taught the Heathenish Mariners to enquire where the fault was in a ſtorm, *Jonah* 1. 7. Much more may the knowledge of Gods Infinite Righteouſneſs teach us? ſo may the holy Word too, that word in *Lam.* 3. 40. *Let us ſearch and try our ways, &c.* and many others. Now

do

do the faculties of the godly soul, being awakened, begin to cast lots upon themselves, to find out the guilty party: And certainly God hath a great hand in ordering these lots, he doth ordinarily *shew unto man his sin*, even by the verdict of his own heart. Conscience, I mean, is Gods Vicegerent in the soul; and though it's true, this Judge is oft-times corrupted and bribed, or at least over-ruled in prosperity; yet God instructeth it to speak good sense, and to speak out, and speak the truth in the time of affliction. I believe they hit the nayl upon the head, who cryed out one to another, *Verily we are guilty concerning our Brother*, Gen. 42. 21. Another cryes, Verily I am guilty concerning my Minister, concerning my People; guilty concerning my Wife, concerning my Children, concerning my Estate, my Time, my Talents; and it may be all true. I believe the Heathen was in the right, who looke upon his hands and feet, and cryed out, *Judg. 1. 7. As I have done, so God hath requited me:* and the Babylonish Monarch came upon a right string, after he was come to his right wits again, *Dan. 4. ult.* ——*Those that walk in pride, he is able to abase.* God hath not given to our faculues any infallibility indeed,

deed, but he inables them to make good guesses; and I am verily perswaded, doth many times lay the hand upon the right sore, and order this secret Lottery from Heaven: So that that faculty, or that frame, or that action which stands convicted in the Court of Conscience, is seldom held guiltless in the Court of Heaven.

3. *It should work us to Humiliation and Reformation; an heart broken, and a conversation healed of its breaches.* By Humiliation, I mean a heart broken purely, properly, and spiritually for sin. I do not mean by it, an heart broken for losses and afflictions, and bowing down it self heavily under the burden of its distresses: no, nor a heart broken for sin, as viewing it only in the calamitous effects, and bitter fruits of it, which I doubt is the Humiliation of most. Many may say concerning their Humiliation, (to use the Prophets words in a different sense, *Zach.* 13. 6.) *These are the wounds with which I was wounded in the house of my friends*, by the loss of my friends, the loss of my health, the loss of my goods; these tears that you see, these groans that you hear, are nothing but the scarr which the soar hath left behind it, and

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the wales which the Rod hath made. I doubt our very ſorrow for ſin, in a time of affliction, admits of a mixture of carnal ſelf and paſſion, and ſo of ſin too. But I mean, a pure, ſpiritual, proper ſorow, and hatred of ſin; which I know may be broached by ſharp afflictions, and have vent given to it by piercing the veſſel; but that is not the proper cauſe and ground of it. *Moſes* in his joy, had an eye to the *recompence of reward. Heb.* 11. 26. And ſo a Chriſtian in his ſorrow may have reſpect to the *recompence of his ſin*, I mean, his afflictions; but it is not primarily and principally cauſed by theſe: For though theſe dreadful ſhowers from Heaven ſhould ceaſe, yet the ſtream of his eyes, or at leaſt the fountain of his heart would not ceaſe iſſuing forth bitter waters. Though the Righteouſneſs of God do ſerve to *give vent* to godly ſorrow, yet it is the goodneſs and holineſs of God that *gives it*. Do we ſorrow for ſin, becauſe it ſpoiled us of our comforts, ſtript us of our ornaments? Then ſure we think there is ſomething in the world worſe than ſin, for which we ſhould bewail it, and hate it; and ſo conſequently, that there is ſomething better than God, for which we ſhould love him. Alas, how apt are we to

run

run into a practical blasphemy before we be aware? In a word then to decide this controversie, Our afflictions, losses, distresses in the world, may possibly be as a *Bucket* to draw up this water of godly sorrow; but they must not be the Cistern to *receive and hold it.* Serious and spiritual Humiliation is a real conversing with the Righteousness of God. To *meet* God, is indeed to *fall down before him*; and to converse with him, is to lie down under him. The truth of which temper is best evidenced by that excellent Commentator, the Life of a Christian: This doth best declare the nature, and interpret the meaning of heart-Humiliation. He that breaks off his sins, doth best make it appear that his heart is broken for them. If you would know whether there have been Rain in the night, look upon the ground, and that will discover. Oh my friends, if the dust be layd; if all earthly joys, contentments, pleasures, concernments, be layd, you may conclude your sorrow was a shower sent into your souls from Heaven.

If you see a Boy both sobbing and minding his Book, you may conclude he hath some right sense of his Masters severity. *Conversion to God*, is the most proper and

real

real *converſing with him* in the way of his Judgments; ſo he himſelf interprets in that complaint made, *Iſa.* 9. 13. *The people turneth not to him that ſmiteth them, &c.* That which happened to *Moſes* when he had been in the Mount with God, *Exod.* 34. 29. ſhould alſo be the condition of every good *Iſraelite*, when he hath been with God in the valley, the *vale of tears*, an afflicted ſtate; his face ſhould ſhine, his converſation ſhould witneſs that he hath been with God; *the ſmell of this fire* ſhould paſs upon his garments, his whole outward man. The ſpirit of mourning ſhould be demonſtrated by the ſpirit of burning. If God from Heaven ſet fire on *the ſtanding Corn* of our *worldly comforts*, we muſt anſwer him from within, and ſet fire on the *ſtubble* of our *worldly luſts*, and corruptions. Let me change our Saviours words therefore a little, *Mat.* 6. 18. and exhort you earneſtly; Thou Chriſtian, when thou faſteſt, when thou humbleſt thy ſoul for ſin, *waſh thy face* alſo, cleanſe thy outward converſation from all ſinful pollution, that thou mayeſt appear to be humbled indeed. And this ſhall be accounted as a true and real converſing with the Righteouſneſs of God in the time of affliction.

3. *Converſe*

3. *Converse with the Faithfulness of God.* This attribute of God hath respect to his promises; and therefore it may be you will think strange that I should speak of this in a discourse of afflictions, as not having place there at all. Every one will readily acknowledge that Gods Soveraignty and Righteousness do clearly appear in his Judgments; but how his Faithfulness can be exercised therein, they see not. What, faithful in punishing, in plaguing, in visiting, in afflicting, distressing his creature, how can that be? Many will be ready to think rather, that God is not faithful at such a time, when he denyes what he had promised to give, takes away what he had promised to continue, when he plagues *David* every morning, when he had promised him that the *Plague should not come nigh his dwelling*, when he brings *Abijah* to the grave, whom he had promised, that his dayes should be *long upon the Land*, and *Job* to the dunghill, to whom all the promises were made both of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. Is this faithfulness? Doth God fulfil his promises by frustrating them? Notwithstanding all this, it seems that the faithfulness of God hath place in the afflictions of his people:

For

For so saith *David* expressly, *Psal.* 119. 75. *I know that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me*: if indeed faithfulness be taken properly in that place: Neither indeed need it seem so strange as some men make it; for God hath promised his covenant-people, to visit their iniquity with a Rod, *Psal.* 89. 32. *The Rod of a man*; a fatherly chastisement, as it is explained, 2 *Sam.* 7. 14. where this seems to be made a branch of the Covenant, and is understood by many as a promise. But if that be not a plain promise, I am sure there is one in *Psal.* 84. 11. *No good thing will he with hold from them that walk uprightly*: And if no good thing, then no correction neither; for that is often good and profitable for the people of God in this world for many excellent ends; which (considering the nature of man) cannot well be accomplished without it; as might appear in many particulars; but it is not needful to run out into them. God will take more care of his own people, than of the rest of the world; and will rather correct them, than not reduce them. It is their main happiness that he takes care for, and he will in kindness take out of the way whatever hinders it, and give whatever may promote it. Gods thoughts are not as

our

our thoughts; he judges otherwise of health, riches, liberty, friends, &c. than we do. We are apt to measure God by ourselves, and our own affections, which is the ground of our mistake in this business. We mind the things that please our flesh, our senses, our appetite, our fancy; but God minds the things that concern our souls, and their true happiness. The Saints are much dearer to God, and much more beloved of him, than they are to themselves; and therefore he will not give them what's sweet, but what's meet, he will give them what makes for their real and eternal happiness, whether they would have it or no. He loves them with a strong and powerful love, and will not deny them any thing that is truly good for them, though they *cry out under it*; nor allow them any thing that is really hurtful, though they *cry after it*. So will a wise Father upon Earth do by his children, to the best of his skill and power, much more will God then, *qui plusquam patrium amorem gerit in suos*, whose bowels are infinitely larger and stronger than those of a Father. Now then, labour to converse with the Faithfulness of God in the time of afflictions, which is by studying the Covenant and the promises of

it, and your present condition, and comparing them together, and observing how consonant and agreeable they are, each interpreting other. As also by perswading your heart of the consistency of afflictions with divine love and favour; and by studying to reconcile the hand and heart of God together. But especially converse with it practically, by a holy *establishment* and settlement of heart under all afflictions. For whereas afflictions in themselves are apt to beget a fearfulness, despondency, or at least fluctuation in the soul, the lively sense of Gods Faithfulness in inflicting them, will settle and sustain it: It is a firm and consistent thing, upon which the shaking soul may settle safely, and center it self boldly.

4. *Converse with the Holiness and unspotted Purity of God.* He is angry, and sins not, he corrects for sin, without sin. *Fury is not in me, saith the Lord*, Isa. 27. 4. There is no passionate malicious temper in the pure and holy God, no revengeful appetite to feed upon the blood of his creature. He is of purer eyes than to behold the least iniquity, and of a purer nature, than any way to miscarry in any of his dealings or dispensations. Converse then with this infinite

Infinite Holiness of God: Keep up pure, equitable, honourable thoughts of him in your hearts. Take heed of fancying to your selves a God guilty of passion or partiality, or carryed away with such weak and mixed affections as we our selves are. But more practically, converse with Gods Holiness in the time of affliction, by laying even little sins greatly to heart: little sins, compared with Infinite Holiness and Purity, ought to be matter of great and serious sorrow to a sensible soul. Again, take heed of the least miscarriages under affliction, of departing from God in the least. This I know is the great duty and care of every tender-hearted Christian at all times. But I conceive we ought more especially to press it upon our hearts in the time of affliction, because we are then most apt to indulge some kind of humane passions, which we call natural affections, as if we had a license to care and fear, and grieve, and complain, not only in an extraordinary, but even in an irregular manner. Oh let the sense of Gods Infinite Purity, and perfect Holiness, check and awe those very natural affections, be they what they will, if they offer to exceed their bounds, and overflow their banks. But this I

touched upon before under another head, amongst the Reasons of the Doctrine. Therefore

5. *Converse with the Almighty Power of God.* That God is Infinite and Almighty in Power, I need not undertake to demonstrate. No man had read a leaf in Scripture, nor indeed turned over one leaf in the book of the creatures, that hath not learnt this. I need not sure turn you to any particular mighty work of God: They that instance in his letting loose the virtues of the creatures, in the case of the universal deluge, or binding up of their influences, as in the case of the three captive Jews, *Daniel* and *Jonah*, when he kept the fire from burning, and forbade the Lions to eat one, and the fish to digest another Prophet whom he had eaten, do make but a poor guess at Almightiness, but a faint essay to describe it. The Creation of the least creature out of nothing, is an higher argument of Divine Power, than the command of the greatest that is already created. Eye God duly in the notion of a Creator; yea, of a Creator of your own souls and bodies, and you have enough to fill you with everlasting admiration, as *David* was filled, *Psal.* 139. 14. *I am fearfully and wonderfully*

fully made. But it is not enough to eye or acknowledge, or admire, we must yet do more, if we will rightly converse with the Almightiness of God, viz. by the acts of *Reverence* and *Dependence*.

1. *Reverence that Almighty and glorious God in your hearts*, who can bring *quodlibet ex quolibet*, any thing out of any thing; yea, out of nothing, yea, any thing to no thing in a moment. Reverence that power of God, that can pour contempt upon Princes, that can bring *Job* the greatest of all the men of the East, to lye in the Ashes, and make his Bed in the Dunghill; that can send home *Naomi* empty, who went out full and flourishing. Hath he done so by you, debased you when you were high, humbled you down from the clouds, and rowled you in the dust, emptied you when you were full, withered you when you were fresh and flourishing? Let not God lose the glory of his Almighty power, reverence that glorious hand of God.

2. Rest upon the same Almighty God, who can also bring up the same *Job* from the dunghill, and set him with Princes, and fill empty *Naomi* with a fulness of Grace, throwing into her lap one of the Ancestors of the *Messiah*, according to the flesh. The same

same Power that caused your Sun to go down at midday, when you least suspected, can also cause it to rise at midnight, when you least hope. Dwell not upon creature probabilities, or improbabilities, but lift up thy self believing soul, and be assured, that God can do what he will, and he will do what is good for them that love him, according to the dictates of unsearchable wisdom and goodness. Thou that art rolled in the dust, yet arise and roll thy self upon those Almighty Arms that brought thee further, and are able to advance thee. As I have seen a child thrown by his Father off, and thrown down to the ground in a seeming displeasure, yet clinging to the same hand, and will not let it go, but at length he rise up again by it: a fit emblem of a child of God, whom his heavenly Father throws as if he had cast off. The wounding hand of God is not to amaze and terrify, and to beget consternation and astonishment. But remember the same hand that wounds, can also heal; he that breaks us, can also make up all our breaches: let this beget confidence and dependence. God never wounds deeper, than that he can effectually bind up the wound again; never throws his people so low, as that they should be

out of his reach. Take heed therefore of unseemly despondencies; cast not away your confidence, which shall have a recompence, if ye maintain it. A recompence I say, for what God that can recover the setting Sun, and exale it in its beauty and brightness, and doth so every morning; that can cloath the forlorn and naked trees with leaves and fruits, that can recover the verdure of the withering grass, and doth so every year, he can also cause light to arise to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death. *Isa.* 9. 2.

He that could give unto *Job* much more than that which he parted with at his command, 2 *Chron.* 25. 9. that could turn again the captivity of *Job*, and give him double for what he had taken from him, *Job* 42. 10. he can surely make his people glad according to the dayes wherein he hath afflicted them, and the yeares wherein they have seen evil, *Psal.* 90. 15. He can recompence and restore unto his penitent people the fruits which the Locusts and the Caterpillars have consumed, according to his promise, *Joel* 2. 25. He can recompence to the people the comforts of health and liberty, which sickness hath consumed, the comforts of friends and relations, which the

grave hath devoured. He that hath made the *Springs dry*, (*Jer.* 51. 36.) can as easily make *the parched ground to become a pool*, and *the thirsty land, springs of water*, Isa. 35. 7. as you find both elegantly joyned together, *Psal.* 107. 33, 35. *He turneth water springs into dry grounds, & sic vicissim.* Say not therefore with the captive Jews, *Ezek.* 37. 11. *Our bones are dryed, and our hope is lost, &c.* For God can cause even those *dry bones to live.* Say not with that low-spirited Courtier, 2 *King.* 7. 19. *If the Lord should make windows in Heaven*, might such plenty be in a *Samaria?* For he did accomplish it, and yet not rain it from Heaven neither. But say with *Job* rather, *Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him*, *Job* 13. 15. And with the three Worthies, *Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us out of thine hand O King*, Dan. 3. 17. So he is able to deliver us out of thine hand, O Enemy, O Prison, O Sickness; yea out of thine hand O grave. If we despond, and be dejected both in mind and body at the same time, then is our condition indeed sad and shameful: Nay, we do more reproach God by such a temper in our affliction than he reproacheth us in afflicting. Make it appear Christians, that the

God have *cast you down*, yet you do believe that he hath not *cast you off*; and that you, although you be sorely *shaken by him*, yet are not *shaken off from him*. Thus you shall glorifie the Almighty Power of God in the day of your Visitation.

6. Converse with the Infinite and unsearchable *Wisdom* of God: especially with the Wisdom of God in reference to his Judgments, and our afflictions. He is infinitly wise in reference to our afflictions. For, 1. *He knows what, and what manner, and what measure of correction we stand in need of.* 2. *When, and how best to deliver us.* 3. *How to make the best use of all for our good.*

First, *He knows what, and what manner, and what measure of correction we stand in need of.* He is that wise Physician, that knows what humor is most predominant in the souls of his servants, and what is the most proper Medicine to purge it out, where the most corrupt blood is setled, and at what vein to let it out. He is infinitely knowing of the various tempers and distempers of his servants, and can fit himself suitably to them all. And for the measure and degree, he is also infinitely wise, and exact. He doth weigh our

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out the afflictions of his people to a grain for quantity, and measure them to a day and hour for duration. He did not miss of his time, no not one day in four hundred and thirty years, *Exod.* 12. 41. So many years of bondage were determined upon the people, and after those years were expired, the very next day, the hosts of the Lord went up out of *Egypt*. And as for measure, he observes a certain proportion, as you may see in that full Text, *Isa.* 28. 27, 28. As the Husbandman uses differing wayes of purging and cleansing different sorts of grain, beating the *Fitches with a Staff*, and *Cummin with a Rod*, because they are a weaker sort of grain, and will not endure hard usage; but *bruising the Bread Corn*, because threshing will not suffice, and he is loth to break it all to pieces with turning his Cart-wheels upon it. An elegant similitude, whereby God insinuateth his different wates of correcting his people, and observing a suitableness to their strength and temper, when less would not do, and more would overdo. He must correct so far as to bruise, but will be sure not to break and spoil. He that saith unto the proud waves of the swelling Sea, *Hitherto shall ye come, and no further,*

ther, Job 38. 11. hath the same command over these Metaphorical waves, those floods of affliction, which he lets loose upon his people, and they cannot go an inch further than he hath appointed: He saith, Hitherto shall this Sickness, this Mortality, this Persecution go, and no further; and even these *storms*, and this *Sea obey him*. Now we converse with this Instance of Divine Wisdom, not only when we observe it, and acknowledge it, but

1. *When it begets in us a friendly and charitable temper towards second causes*: When we are at peace with the whole Creation, even with enemies themselves; and in perfect charity with those very Plagues and Sicknesses that do arrest us, rather admiring and delighting in their subserviency to God, than at all maligning their severe influences upon us. A good man is so much in love with the pure and holy, and perfect will of God, that he desires also to fall in love with, at least he is at peace with every thing that executes it, that serves the will of his heavenly Father. He sees no reason in the world to fall out with, and fret against any man, or any thing that is a means to afflict him; but views them all as instruments in the hand

of

of God, readily serving his will, and doing his pleasure, and under this notion is charitably affected towards them all. Observe a little, and admire, how *David* was reconciled to the Rod, because it was in the hand of his Father, and seems to kiss it for the relation that it had to the Divine Will, 2 *Sam.* 16. 11. *Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him.* This gracious soul is so wonderfully inlove with the Will of God, that he could almost find in his heart to be reconciled to sin it self, if it do accomplish it, and to be friends with the *wrath of man*, if it work *the righteousness of God*. And if *David* can be so charitably affected towards a cursing *Shimei*, viewing him as an instrument in the hand of God; methinks we may be almost inlove with any thing under that notion, and much rather say concerning a poor harmless Sickness, Let it alone, so let it put us to pain, for God hath sent it. To this sense may a devout soul draw the words of his Saviour concerning the Woman in *Mat.* 26. 10 *Why trouble ye the Woman? she hath wrought a good work upon me*: Why do ye interrupt and disturb this disease? Why do ye fret against this Persecutor? Why do ye repine at this Prison? it exe-

cutes

cutes the will of my God upon me. What though these men pour out their venom in such abundance? What though this disease spend its influences upon my body so plentifully? There's *no waste* in all this: there's need of just so much; God doth not lavish out his Arrows in vain, not shoot at rovers, as *Jonathan* did, who cozened his Lad, making him believe he shot at a mark, when he shot at none. A *soul* overpowered with the sense of Gods Infinite Wisdom in appointing, measuring, timing all afflictions, will easily be reconciled to a poor harmless creature, which is set on, and taken off at his pleasure.

2. *When it begets in us a holy Acquiescency and resting in God*, which is opposed to a larger and disorderly hastening towards deliverance. Then do we indeed own and honour the skill of our Chirurgion, when we do quietly suffer the corrosive plaisters to lie on, and do not offer to pluck them off, notwithstanding the smart they put us to. And surely he that believeth the Infinite Wisdom of God, who knows what, and what manner and measure of correction we stand in need of, will not *make haste* to be delivered from under his hand; but composeth himself quietly;

quietly; as young *Samuel* layd himself down, and when he was called, answered cheerfully, *Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth.*

A soul sensible of Gods Infinite Wisdom in this particular, argues thus, Who am I poor worm, shallow creature, that I should contend with Infinite Wisdom about the time, or manner of my being in the world? Why did I not also undertake to appoint him the time and place of my being born? Shall I say it is too much, when Infinite Wisdome thinks it is not enough? Cease wrangling, soul, and be at rest, for the Lord deals wisely with thee. Such a soul in conversing with the all-wise God, dare freely refer all to him, venture all with him; if he smite him on *the one cheek*, he dare *turn to him the other*; if he take away his Coat, he dare offer him his Cloak also; if he take away his liberty, he dare trust him with his life too; if he smite him in some of his comforts, he dare turn to him the rest also; for he knows that Infinite Wisdom cannot erre in Judgment, nor miscarry in his dispensations.

Secondly, *God knoweth when, and how best to deliver us.* This necessarily follows upon the former. To him all time, and

and all things past, present, and to come, are equally present: In one single act of understanding, he doth wonderfully comprehend both causes and events, sicknesses and cures, afflictions and deliverances. Let the Atheistical world cry, These are they that are forsaken, whom no man careth for; there is no hope for them in their God, as their manner is to blaspheme. Still the promise stands unrepealed in both Testaments, I will never leave you, nor forsake you; though the case be never so extreme and desperate, still the Apostles word holds good, 2 *Pet.* 2. 9. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations. If all passages be blockt up, he will rather make a gap in the Sea, than his people shall not escape, *Exod.* 14. And this way and time of Gods delivering, is the most excellent, suitable, and certain, as might abundantly appear in many particulars: But that would be a digression. In the general, be assured that Gods way is the best way of deliverance, and his time is also the best time. He that sits as a *Refiner of Silver*, knows how, and when to take out the metal, that it be purified, and not hurt. Here I might enter into a large discourse, and shew you how the

judgment

judgment of man is ordinarily deceived, and his expectations disappointed, which he had built upon creature-probabilities, when in the mean time the purpose of God takes place in a far better and more comfortable deliverance of his servants. But it may suffice to have hinted it only.

Our duty is to converse with this Instance of Divine Wisdom by the exercises of *Patience* and *Hope*. If God seem to tarry long, yet wait patiently for his appearance; for he will appear in the most acceptable time, and *in the end ye shall consider it*, and acknowledge it. Take heed of limiting the Holy One of *Israel*, as that murmuring generation did, *Psal.* 78. 41. Take heed of fixing of your deliverance to such or such a train and series of causes which you have layd in your own heads, and of engaging God to act by your Method: If God be a wise Agent, its fit he should be a free Agent too. Bear up Christian soul, faint not when thou art rebuked of him; *Cast thy burden upon the Lord*, and he will in due time, find out a way either of lessening it, or removing it. *You have heard of the patience of* Job, *and you have seen the end of the Lord*, James 5. 11. Be you patient, and you shall see it too; a better

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end than ever you could have accompliſht by your own act or induſtry. In the mean time, cheriſh in your hearts a lively hope of an happy iſſue: For your lives and comforts are all hid in him, in whom alſo are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge. As the conſideration of Infinite Wiſdom, in knowing how, and when beſt to deliver us, may ſettle our hearts that they do not riſe up as a foam upon the waters through impatience; ſo it may bear up our hearts, that they do not ſink within us, as a ſtone in the waters, through deſperation.

Thirdly, *God knoweth how to make the beſt uſe of all for our good.* I ſay, of all, both of the affliction, the manner and meaſure of it, of his delay, and of the ſeaſon which he chuſes to redeem us in. He can make *Paul's* impriſonment turn to his advantage, *Phil.* 1. 19. *Job's* captivity to redound to his far greater ſtate, *Job ult. Joſeph's* baniſhment, to make him great, and *Manaſſeh's*, to make him good. This is a large Theme, and therefore I dare not riſle into it particularly. Take all in one word from the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 8. 28. *All things do work together for good to them that love God.* Whatever the promiſes be, the

only wise God knows how to draw a happy conclusion from them. Get a firm belief of this radicated in your hearts, and converse with the Wisdom of God in this Instance of it by the great Grace of *Self-resignation.* The Soveraignty of God may well work us into a resignation of our interests, and comforts, and concernments to him: But this Infinite Wisdom of God ought in reason to work us into a resignation even of our very wills unto him. Oh this debasing of self-will, this self-resignation is a noble and ingenuous act of a pious soul (for so I dare call him in whom it is found) whereby it honours God greatly in all that comes upon it. A godly soul, considering it self ignorant of many things, burdened with many corruptions, and clogg'd with an animal body, senses, appetite, fancy, which are always calling for things inconvenient, if not unlawful, doth conclude it would not be good for it to be at its own finding, or caring, or carving: and duly eying that infinite mind and understanding, who in a wonderful, unaccountable manner, orders all things, and all events to the best and certain issue, is so mastered by, and indeed enamoured with the sense of it, that he renounces his own

own wiſdom, and throws out his own clamorous will, and complyes readily with the all-wiſe God. This is truly to converſe with the Wiſdom of God, when we do out of choice refer our ſelves to it, and rowl our ſelves upon it. Every bare acknowledgment of Divine Wiſdom is not a proper converſing with it; but when the ſame is wrought into the ſoul, and the lively ſenſe of it doth ſo over-power the heart, that the will is prepared to cloſe readily with ſuch Methods as God ſhall pleaſe to uſe to accompliſh his own ends; then do we properly, and feelingly converſe with God, under the notion of the All-wiſe God. But this of Self-reſignation I ſpoke ſomething to under the firſt head; and much of that which is ſpoken there, may be indifferently applyed hither. Therefore

7. Converſe with the unbounded *Goodneſs, Love, and Mercy of God.* God is infinitely and unchangeably loving and merciful to his people: he is *good*, ſaith the Pſalmiſt; and he is *Love*, ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *John* 4. 8. Thoſe dreadful and terrifying apprehenſions which men have of the bleſſed and good God, as if he were ſome auſtere and ſurly Majeſty, given to paſſion

and revenge, are apt to destroy that chearful and ingenuous converse with him, which the creature should maintain with its Creator at all times: But then are we most prone to entertain those apprehensions, and to harbour such unseemly notions of him, when he appears in the way of his judgments, when we take a view of him in the ruines of our comforts, the blood of our friends, the spoyl of our goods, and in the distresses of our lives. We are apt to frame notions of God according to what we find in our own disposition, to fancy a God like unto our selves; and therefore we cannot eye an afflicting God, but we presently conclude an angry God; as though the Eternal and Pure Being, were subject to passions and changes, as we are. These apprehensions being once drunk into the soul, it becomes unhinged presently, and almost afraid to behold the face of love it self, but flyes and hides it self, as *Adam* in the Garden: or if the soul do converse with God at all, it is as a City that is besieged converses with the enemy without, *viz.* sending out to seek peace, and to obtain a cessation of Arms. And so a soul may bestow much upon God, surrender up the Castle, give him all that he hath almost, not for any love

love that he bears to him; but as *Joash* gave *Hazael* a preſent of gold and precious things, to hire him to depart from him, 2 *King.* 12. 18. Oh then they will on and do any thing; yea, circumciſe their lives, as *Zipporah* circumciſed her Son, *Exod.* 4 25. to eſcape the hands of an angry God. Every one will converſe with God as an enemy in time of extremity; hang out a flag for peace, ſend preſents, pay a homage, ſend Embaſſadors to entreat his face: But few know how to converſe with the Goodneſs and Mercy of God, with him as their dear and only friend in a time of affliction, freely and chearfully. Now there ſeems to be a double account to be given of mens not converſing with the Goodneſs and Mercy of God in the time of afflictions.

1. *Many cannot believe the Mercy and Kindneſs of God, when he is in the way of his Judgments.* If it be ſo, why am I thus? cryes the poor ſoul, ſtrugling under its burden, and travelling in pangs to be delivered of its griefs. Thus unbelievingly argues *Gideon* (who was otherwiſe famous for faith) in the time of his bitter bondage under the Midianites, *Judg.* 6. 13. when an Angel from Heaven was ſent to aſſure

him of the good will of God towards him, he could not entertain the news, nor believe the report, because of the anguish of his soul, but cryes out, *Oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why is all this evil befallen us?* No, the Lord hath forsaken us; for he hath delivered us into the hands of the *Midianites*. The sad soul is ready to cry concerning Christs gracious presence, as the two Sisters concerning his personal presence, *John* 11. 21, 32. *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my Brother had not dyed*: Lord, if thou hadst been here, if thou hadst loved me, if thou hadst had any delight in me, my Brother had not dyed, my Husband, my Wife, my Children had not dyed; I had not been thus plagued, afflicted, wounded, tormented as I am. Hence we have those many complaints of the afflicted soul, up and down the Psalms; *Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious? Is his Mercy clean gone? Hath he shut up his tender Mercies in anger?* and many such like. The smart of our senses, is apt to pervert the judgment of our minds; and the sense of bodily evils, is ready to destroy all sense of the Infinite and Unchangeable Goodness and Love of God. Now this great evil seems to arise from these two causes, *viz. our*

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measuring of God and his Divine Dispositions, by our selves and humane passions and affections, as I hinted before: And *our measuring the Love of God too much by the proportion that he gives us of worldly prosperity.* Woe to him in a day of distress, that was wont to judge of Divine Love by the things that are *before him*, as *Solomon* calls the things of this world, *Eccles.* 9 1. This, I say, is the temper, the infirmity of many in the time of afflictions: though indeed there be no reason for it. For why should we conclude harshly concerning *Job* upon the dunghill, any more than we would conclude charitably concerning *Ahab* on the Throne? Besides, the Scripture teaches it expressly, that the Love of God doth stand with correction, *Psal.* 89. 33. I will visit his iniquity, but my loving kindness will I not take from him: Nay, it seems as if it could not well stand without it, *Heb.* 12. 6. *Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth.*

2. Others do indeed believe the Goodness and Mercy of God to them in a time of affliction, *but either they cannot, or dare not, or will not converse with it, nor take comfort in it.* They remember God with

the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 77. 3. *i. e.* the Goodneſs, Bounty, Mercy of God (ſaith *Mollerus*) and yet at the ſame time are *troubled*; their hearts are unquiet, fluctuating, tumultuous within them. The ſoul is ſo impreſt with the ſenſe of ſin which it hath contracted from the conſideration of its ſufferings, that it dare not preſume to meddle with Mercy; but though this Mercy of God be its own, yet is ready to think that it is a duty *to forſake its own Mercies*, as though it heard God chiding it in the words of *Jehu* to *Joram's* ſcout, 2 *King.* 9. 18. *What haſt thou to do with peace?* What haſt thou to do with Mercy? *turn ye behind me.* An afflicted ſoul hath much adoe to believe it to be a duty to converſe with the Goodneſs and Love of God in a time of affliction. It eaſily agrees to converſe with the Juſtice, Holineſs, and Power of God indeed; but thinks it very improper, and unſeaſonable, if not unſafe, to converſe with his Mercy. It is ready to cry with *Solomon* preſently, *In the day of proſperity rejoyce, but in the day of adverſity conſider:* or with the Apoſtle, *If any be afflicted, let him pray*; if he be merry, let him ſing Pſalms. Converſing with the Goodneſs of God ſeems not to be a duty of this ſeaſon.

ſeaſon. I confeſs this is a high and hard duty. Every ſmatterer in Religion will cry out in his affliction, Thou art juſt and righteous, O Lord: But, Thou art good and merciful: Bleſſed be the name of the Lord, is the voice of a *Job* only, *Job* 1. 21. But it is a duty, though a hard one; and affording much pleaſure and contentment to them that are exerciſed therein. That the kindneſs and benignity of God doth not fail, that his Love is not broken off from his people; no, nor ſuſpended neither, when he afflicts them moſt, is moſt certain. For, though he worketh changes, in and upon us, yet himſelf is eternally and unchangeably the ſame, *Jer.* 1. 17. And, though ſome of his dealings towards his people ſeem to be rough and ſevere, yet if we judge rightly of them, they are all Mercy and Truth towards them that keep his Covenant, *Pſal.* 25. 10. And that the people of God ought to converſe with this Divine Love and Mercy even in their greateſt afflictions, is as clear: To this purpoſe I might alledge the forequoted example of holy *Job*; and might enforce this Doctrine from the Apoſtles words, *Phil.* 4. 4. and *Jam.* 1. 2. *Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations*; and from many

many good Reasons too, if it were needful. I know indeed that it is a hard thing to keep up a right frame towards, and converse rightly with the Righteousness, and Goodness of God at the same time; the one frame is ready to justle out the other. Sorrow is apt to contract the heart, and destroy the large and chearful temper of it: And joy doth dilate and enlarge it, and is ready to make it forget its grief: But, though it be hard, yet it is possible: These two may well consist in the same soul, according to that in *Psal* 2. 11. ——*Rejoyce with trembling.*

But how must we converse with the Love and Mercy of God in the time of afflictions? I have partly prevented my self in this already; but I shall speak a little more distinctly of it. We do not then converse with the Goodness and Mercy of God, when we barely think of it, or acknowledge it: But

1. *When we believe and apply it, and take to our selves the comforts of it.* When we look through the clouds that are round about us, and quite cover us, and by the eye of faith behold the Fountain and Father of Light: when we can look beyond the frowns that are in his face, and the Rod that

is in his hand, and see the good will that dwells in the heart of God towards us. More especially

2. When we do not only see and believe it, but also draw virtue and influences down from it into our souls, to establish, settle, and satisfie them. Not so much when we see it, as when we taste it; when we feel the Sun of Righteousness warm us, though it do not dazle us; and though we cannot perceive it to shine upon us, yet we find it to shine in us. We do then converse with the Love and Mercy of God in an afflicted state, when the same doth bear us up, not only from utter sinking; but even from inordinate sorrowing; when we draw a virtue from it into our souls to sustain them, yea and to cherish them too. Thus *Job comforts* himself in his living Redeemer, *Job* 19. 25 and the Psalmist in the Mercy of God, even when he was ready to slip, *Psal.* 94. 18. 19. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.* In a word, we converse with Divine Goodness, when we are really warmed with it; and with Almighty Love, when we rejoyce in it, and can with holy venturousness, and humble confidence, throw our selves into the very bosome of it: when

when we receive impreſſions of it from the Spirit of God, and are thereby molded into a temper ſuitable to it, and becoming it. For then indeed do we moſt happily converſe with the Love and Goodneſs of God, when we for our part do live upon it; when we being aſſured of an intereſt in a loving and good God, do render up our ſelves alſo unto him, in the moſt beautiful and becoming affections of Love, Joy, Confidence, and holy Delight. This is an excellent frame; and, ſure I am, it is much for our intereſt, thus to converſe with God in the time of our afflictions. It is a high way of glorifying God, and bringing much credit to Religion: And indeed he that keeps up this frame, can be afflicted but in part; he ſcapes the greater half of the evil: For though it be never ſo ſtormy a time without him, a ſtorm upon his houſe, upon his goods, upon his relations, yea upon his own body; yet it is a calm day within; in the ſoul there is peace and tranquillity.

Laſtly (and indeed everlaſtingly too) we are to converſe with the Infinite, *ſelf-ſufficient Fulneſs of God* in a day of the greateſt extremity: that is, as if I ſhould ſay, not with any one ſingle Attribute, but with

with the very godhead of God, the immenſe perfection of God, the Allneſs of the Deity. Oh how ſeaſonably doth this bleſſed object preſent its ſelf to the ſoul in a time of afflictions, loſſes, mortalities, perſecutions, when we are moſt emptied of creature-enjoyments, and the emptineſs of them doth moſt appear! for upon theſe two doth our converſing with God much depend. I need not tell you how apt we are to live beſide God, when we have our fill of creature-delights; whilſt we can entertain our hearts with a created ſweetneſs, we fooliſhly forget and neglect the ſupreme good. And ſo fond and unreaſonable is this affection, that no warnings, no precepts will ſerve the turn; God is forced to break that off from us, from which we would not be broken. Sure I am, the bleſſed and bountiful God envyes not his ſervants any of their creature-comforts or delights; but he loves them (as I ſaid before) with a ſtrong and powerful love, and will not ſuffer them to live ſo much to their loſſes, as they do, when they ſpend noble affections upon tranſitory things, in the everlaſting enjoyment of which they could never be happy. Now afflictions are a negative, if we ſpeak properly, even as ſin

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is; and whenever we are afflicted in any kind, we are emptied of some created good; as poverty is nothing but the absence of riches; sickness the want of ease, of order, of health in the constitution; restraint is the loss of liberty, &c. So then it appears, that in a time of affliction, God is emptying us of creature enjoyment; for indeed affliction it self is little or nothing else but such an emptying or deprivation. And that then the emptiness of the creature doth most appear, I suppose all will grant. The sick person looks upon his decayed strength, and withering members, and is feelingly convinced of the truth of the Scripture, — *All flesh is grass.* Another casts about his eyes with *Sampson*, and sees *heaps upon heaps*, and cryes out like one that feels the weight of his own words, *Childhood and youth are vanity*: or alas how soon is the *desire* of ones *eyes taken away with a stroke!* Another sees his goods carryed away before his face; and his house on fire before his eyes, and then cryes out, that he hath a real proof of the vanity of those things, which *Solomon* had long ago observed, *Prov.* 23. 5. *Riches take themselves wings and fly away as an Eagle towards Heaven.* — Whilst we see the creatures stand, we will not

not believe but they are ſtable; whilſt we ſee them fair and flouriſhing, we cannot rightly lay to heart the withering nature of them: but when we ſee them *cut down*, we do then conclude they were but *flowers*; when we ſee them *flitting*, we conclude they are *ſhadows*: when God *pours* them out upon the ground, we are then convinced that they were unſtable as *waters*: To ſhew us what the beſt of our creature-enjoyments are, God is forced to take them quite away, that they be no more.

Now then in ſuch a caſe, at ſuch a time, converſe with the Infinite, ſelf-ſufficient Fulneſs of God. Oh now it is ſeaſonable; now it is your duty; nay now it will be your greateſt policy! If that chanel, that creature-chanel be ſtopt, in which your affections were wont to run too freely; turn the ſtream of them into their proper chanel in which they may run freely, and neither ever meet with obſtruction, nor ever overflow. Let your ſoul grow up into acquaintance and union with God by creature-breaches and diſappointments. More particularly, converſe with the ſelf-ſufficient Fulneſs of God,

1. By the act of *Creature-denyal*. The eying of an infinite, abſolute, uncreated Fulneſs

Fulneſs in a right manner, takes off the ſoul from all created objects, earthly things: even as the beholding of the Sun in its glory, dazles the eye to all things below. God becomes ſo great in the eye of the ſoul, that it cannot ſee the poor motes of worldly comforts. Give a ſoul a feeling taſte of the infinite ſweetneſs and fulneſs of the fountain, and its thirſt after the poor puddles of the world is preſently abated, if not perfectly quenched; according to that of our Saviour, *Joh.* 4. 14. *Whoſoever ſhall drink of the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall never thirſt*; that is, not after any other thing. Like unto which is that Goſpel promiſe, *Iſa.* 49. 10. they ſhall not thirſt, who do enjoy theſe ſprings of water. When this fountain is opened in the eye of the ſoul, and the ſoul begins to taſte of it, it longs to drink deeper of that indeed; but as for all other waters, waters of the Ciſtern, the ſoul looks upon them as not being, or at leaſt as being bitter, waters of *Marah* in compariſon; we do then truly converſe with the infinite, ſelf-ſufficient Fulneſs of God, when we look upon all created good with a noble diſdain, are content to part with it; or if we do ſtill enjoy it, are reſolved to enjoy it only

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in God, and ſo look upon it, and love it, only as a beam from the Father of Lights; as a drop of the infinite Fountain of all Perfections. Tell me, Is it not a poor and low thing that many Profeſſors do, who acknowledge and magnifie the uncreated Goodneſs, the Fulneſs of God; and yet at the ſame time do covet and court the creature with all eagerneſs; and their worldlineſs is apparently too hard for their Religion? Methinks I hear God ſpeaking to ſuch ſeeming friends, as *Dalilah* to *Sampſon*, *Judg.* 16. 15. How can ye ſay, you love me, when your heart is not with me? To theſe mens hearts, methinks our Saviours Doctrine ſhould ſtrike cold, *Mat.* 6. 21. *Where your treaſure is, there will your heart be alſo*: And thoſe words of his beloved Apoſtle, 1 *Joh.* 2. 15. *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* Let a man pretend and profeſs what he will; and in words magnifie the Fulneſs and Sufficiency of God as much as he will; if in the mean time his ſoul be bound up in the creature, ſuch a mans Religion is vain: nay, indeed his profeſſion of God becomes a real reproaching of him, and a blaſphemy againſt Reaſon it ſelf. Let your low eſtem of all

created good in comparison of the supreme good, your readiness to quit your title to every creature-comfort, and in the mean time your care to live beside it, witness the true and honourable esteem, the true and feeling sense that you have in your hearts of the infinite and self-sufficient Fulness of God. For, however men may make a shift to cheat themselves, God is not truly great in the soul, till all other things become as nothing; neither doth the soul rightly converse with his Infinite Fulness, so long as any thing stands in opposition to it, or competition with it.

2. Converse with the self-sufficient Fulness of God by the grace of *Faith*: I mean by that act of it, whereby we do interest our selves, and as it were wrap up our own souls in this Fulness, and make it our own. And herein there is no danger of a humble souls being too bold or venturous: For the Proclamation is full, and the Invitation free, *Isa.* 55. 1. *Joh.* 7. 37. *Rev.* 22. 17. —— *Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* What *Seneca* sayes of the soul in regard of the divine original of it, may sure be better said of a godly soul, in respect of the Divine Nature, and qualities of it, *illum divina delectant,*

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nec ut alienis interest sed ut suis; it doth not converse with things divine, as with an others, but as its own. And indeed we cannot truly and comfortably converse with the Infinite Perfection and Fulness of God, if we have no title to it: but then we converse with God, when we converse with our own God, not anothers: when the soul is able to say, All this Fulness of Power, Wisdom, Goodness, is all mine in my head Christ Jesus; for in him *all* this *Fulness dwels*, Col. 2. 9. and he dwelleth in me; *in him are hid* all these treasures, Col. 2. 3. and *my life also is hid with Christ in God*, as theirs was in Col. 3. 3. You see then, that a soul cannot converse with the Infinite Fulness and Self-sufficiency of God, but by Christ; for it is in and by him that we receive of Divine Fulness, *Joh.* 1. 16. Hence was that of the devout Father, *Tolle meum, tolle Deum*; to which I may add, *Tolle Jesum, & tollis meum.* The fulness of a fountain is nothing to me, except it be mine. There is bread enough in my Fathers house, sayes the poor Prodigal, but for all that I perish with hunger: so is there living waters evermore in this uncreated life, this infinite Spring of all Perfection; yet many souls are choakt with thirst, be-

cauſe the fountain is not theirs; it is a fountain ſealed, as *Solomon* ſpeaks in another caſe; *The Well is deep*, and they have *nothing to draw with*, as the Woman ſaid concerning another Well, *Joh.*4. Therefore be ſure you get an intereſt in the Fulneſs and Sufficiency of God; or as *Solomon* ſpeaks in another caſe (*Prov.* 5.15.) Drink waters out of thine own Well.

3. Converſe with the Self-ſufficient Fulneſs of God, by delighting your ſelves in it. Drink of this Fountain, yea *drink abundantly* ye *beloved* of God, *Cant.* 5. 1. yea, lie down by it, *Pſal.* 23. 2. yea bathe you ſelves wholly in it; *Enter into the Joy of your Lord*, lie down in his boſome, ſpread your ſelves in his Love and Fulneſs. The Beloved Diſciple leaning upon the breaſt of his Lord at Supper, was but a dark ſhadow, a poor ſcant reſemblance of a beloved ſoul, which by the lovely acts of Joy and Confidence, and Delight, layes it ſelf down in the boſome of Jeſus, and doth not feed with him, but feed upon him, and his Alſufficiency. Then do we converſe indeed feelingly and comfortably with the Infinite Fulneſs, when the ſoul is ſwallowed up in it, doth reſt in it, is filled with it, and centred upon it. Oh the noble and free-born ſpirit

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of true Religion, that diſdaining the purſuit of low and created things, is carryed out with delight to feed, and dwell, and live upon uncreated Fulneſs! Then is a ſoul raiſed to its juſt altitude, to the very height of its Being, when it can ſpend all its powers upon the ſupreme and ſelf-ſufficient good, ſpreading and ſtretching it ſelf upon God with full contentment, and wrapping up it ſelf entirely in him. This is the ſouls way of living above loſſes; and he that ſo lives, though he may often be a *loſer*, yet ſhall never be *at a loſs*. He who feeds upon created Goodneſs or Sweetneſs, may ſoon eat himſelf out of all; the ſtock will be ſpent, and (which is worſe) the ſoul will be *dryed up*; that hath nothing elſe to nouriſh it. But he that lives upon uncreated Fulneſs, is never at a loſs, though he loſe never ſo much of the creature: For who will value the ſpilling of a diſh of water, that hath a well of living water at his door, from whence he had that, and can have more as good, though not the ſame. Nay, to ſpeak properly, this is the only way to loſe nothing. For how can he be properly ſaid to loſe any thing, who poſſeſſes all things? And ſo doth

he, I am ſure, who is filled with the Fulneſs of God. Be ſure therefore, that in the want, in the loſs of all things, you live upon the Fountain-fulneſs, delight your ſelf in the Lord, after the example of the Prophet *Habakkuk*, *cap.* 3. 17, 18.

for the application goe back to page 31

A
Farewel to Life.

2 Cor. 5. 6.

——ἐνδημοῦντες ἐν τῷ σώματι, ἐκδημοῦμεν ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου. *Whilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord.*

THE holy Apoſtle having in the firſt verſe of this Chapter layd down the Doctrine of Eternal Glory, which ſhall follow upon this tranſitory life of Believers, ſhews in the following verſes how he himſelf longed within himſelf, and groaned after that happy ſtate: And then

Proceeds to give a double ground of this his confident expectation; one in *verſ.* 5. therefore is the Apoſtle confident concerning the putting off of this mortal body, becauſe God had wrought and formed him for this ſtate of glory, and already given him an *earneſt* of it, even his holy Spirit: The other ground of the confidence and ſettledneſs of his mind as to his deſires of a change, is taken from his preſent ſtate in the body, which was but poor and uncomfortable in compariſon of that glorious ſtate: This in the words of the Text, *Therefore we are alwayes confident, knowing that whilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord.* For I do not take the words [we are confident] concerning the Apoſtles reſolvedneſs with a quiet and ſober mind to ſuffer any kind of perſecution or affliction whatever; but *we are alwayes confident, i. e.* we do with confidence expect, or at leaſt we are alwayes well ſatisfied, contented, well reſolved in our minds concerning our departure out of this life: For the Apoſtle was ſpeaking not of afflictions or perſecutions in the former verſes, but indeed of death; which he calls a diſſolving of the earthly houſe of this tabernacle, *verſ.* 1. and a being cloathed

cloathed upon with our houſe which is from Heaven, *verſ.* 2. 4. Yea and thus the Apoſtle explains himſelf, *verſ.* 8. where he tells you what he means by this his confidence, *we are confident and willing rather to be abſent from the body*; where the latter words are exegetical to the former, *q. d.* It is better to be with the Lord, than in this mortal body; but we cannot be with the Lord whilſt we are in this body; it keeps us from him, therefore we have the confidence to part with it. It is the reaſon of the Apoſtles confidence and willingneſs to part with the body, that I am to ſpeak of; and the reaſon is, becauſe this body keeps him from his Lord, —— *whilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord.* The words are a Metaphor, and are to be tranſlated thus, *we indwelling in the body, do dwell out from the Lord*; which our Tranſlation renders well, taking little notice of the Metaphor, *whilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord.* Though indeed if they had left out that word [*at home*] it would have been as well, and ſo have neglected the Metaphor altogether, as we may haply hint hereafter. The words are a reaſon of the Apoſtles willingneſs to be diſſolved, and do contain

contain a kind of an accusat on of the body, and so seem to lay a blame upon it, and upon this animal life; which must be remembred. Now for the former phrase of being at home in the body, it is easily understood, and generally (I think) agreed upon, to be no more than whilst we carry about with us this corruptible flesh, whilst we live this natural animal life. It only signifies man in his compounded animal state, ἄνθρωπος, and doth not at all allude to his sinful, unregenerate or carnal state. But the latter phrase [*Absent from the Lord*] is capable of a double sense, both good and true; and I think both fit enough to the context and drift of the Apostle. I shall speak to both, but insist most upon the latter.

1. Whilst we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord, *i. e. from the bodily presence of the Lord in Heaven*, absent from Christ Jesus and his glory: And so the words are the same in sense with 1 *Cor.* 15. 50. *Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God*: for by *flesh and blood* there, must needs be meant man in this animal corruptible state. And so the Apostle accuses this kind of life in the body; and, as it were, blames it for standing between

him

him and his glorified Lord; and so consequently between him and the glory of his Lord. And this sense doth well agree with what went before, and with what follows. The Apostle hath a great mind to depart; for whilst he is in the body, he is absent from his perfect happiness: For this is the consummation of a Christians happiness, to be with the Lord, to be admitted to a beholding of his infinite glory; as appears by our Saviours earnest prayer for this, *Joh.* 17. 24. *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.* Besides, if we shall see him as he is, we must also needs be made like unto him, 1 *Joh.* 3. 2. else how can we be fit to live for ever in his presence. Now we are kept from this seeing and beholding of the Lord in glory, by this animal life: It stands between us and the Crown, between us and our Masters Joy, between us and the perfect enjoyment of God. To be with the Lord, is a state of perfect freedom from sin. No unclean thing shall, or can enter into Heaven, *Rev.* 21. 27. A perfect freedom from all manner of afflictions, *Rev.* 21. 4. *There shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, nor pain,* and ἀδακρὺν, νέμονται ἀῶνα, all tears shall be

wiped

wiped away from their eyes: A ſtate of freedom from all temptations to ſin: For a tempting Devil, and all tempting luſts ſhall be caſt out for ever: A ſtate of perfect peace without the leaſt diſturbance from within, or from without: of perfect joy, that ſhall neither have end nor abatement; and of perfect holineſs, when the whole ſoul ſhall be enlarged and raiſed to know, and love, and enjoy the bleſſed God as much as created nature is capable. This is the happy ſtate of ſeeing God, of being with the Lord: And it is thy corruptible body, this animal life that interpoſes between us and it; ſo that the Apoſtle is confident, and rather willing to depart and be with the Lord, than ſtay here and be without him.

2. Whilſt we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord, without any reference to the world to come; and ſo it may be fitly tranſlated *diſtant* from the Lord, eſtranged from God: This agrees well with the context, and ſcope of the Apoſtle alſo. And thus the words are alſo a good ground of the Apoſtles reſolution and willingneſs to dye, *q. d.* I am willing to be abſent from this body; for whilſt I am in it, I find my ſelf to be at a great diſtance

ſtance from God. And indeed the word ἐκδημεῖν ſignifies properly *to be at a diſtance*, or to be eſtranged: So I find it interpreted by a learned Critick, without any myſtery, (as he ſpeaks) of the diſtance that even Believers themſelves ſtand at from God in this life. And in this ſenſe I ſhall chuſe to proſecute the words. In which ſenſe the Apoſtle blames this body and animal life, becauſe it keeps us at a diſtance from God; is a clog, a ſnare, a fetter, a pinion to the ſoul. And ſo the words do agree in ſenſe with thoſe of our Saviour, *Mat.* 26.41. *The ſpirit is willing, but the fleſh is weak*; where by the [*fleſh*] muſt needs be underſtood the body, if we conſider the context, *viz.* the occaſion upon which the words were ſpoken, the ſleepineſs of the Apoſtles; or if we conſider the propriety of ſpeech according to the ſtyle of the New Teſtament: True indeed, the corruption of nature is ſometimes called *Fleſh*; but according to that way of ſpeaking, our Saviour would rather have ſaid, That the ſpirit was willing, but the fleſh was ſtrong; as he ſaith elſewhere, That the *ſtrong man* armed kept the houſe. Now to explain this Doctrine a little; *That even the godly themſelves, whilſt they are in this body, are*

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at a distance from the Lord: It must be granted, that the godly soul is nigh unto God, even whilst it sojourns in this mortal body, and tottering flesh. All souls are involved in the Apostasie of *Adam*, and are fallen down from God, have alike straggled from their God, and are sunk into self and the creature: God opened a way for their return by the blood of Jesus: for we owe it unto Christs death, not only that God is *reconciled to us*, pardoning our sins, but that any of our natures become *reconciled to God*, by accepting of him as our God, and loving him as the chiefest good. Now there is a double being brought nigh to God by Christ. The first is more general, external, and, as I may say, relational: Thus the partition-wall being broken down, the Gentiles that were converted from their Idolatry, to a profession of God and Christ, and admitted to a communion with the Visible Church, are upon that account said to be *Brethren* to the rest of Gods Children, 1 *Cor.* 5. 11. and as to the Church, they are said to be *within* it, *vers.* 12. though at the same time they were *Fornicators, Covetous, Drunkards*: And as to God, they are said to be *made nigh*, Ephes. 2. 13. A professing

profeſſing of God is ſaid to be a being nigh to him; and even an external performance is ſaid to be a drawing nigh to him; and ſo *Nadab* and *Abihu*, even in the offering of ſtrange fire, are ſaid to have drawn nigh to God, *Levit.* 10. 3. And this, though it be a priviledge, yet it is not that honourable priviledge of the truly godly ſouls, who are by Chriſt Jeſus raiſed up to God in their hearts, and reconciled to him in their natures, and united to him in their affections; and ſo are made nigh unto him in a more eſpecial and ſpiritual manner. Thus all ſinful and wicked ſouls, notwithſtanding all their profeſſion and performances, are far from God, eſtranged from the life of God. Enmity and diſſimilitude are the moſt real diſtance from God: And truly God-like ſouls only are nigh unto him; they dwell in him, and he dwelleth in them as in his moſt proper Temple. As to any kind of Appoſition, no man can draw nigh to God, nor by any local acceſſion; for ſo all men are alike nigh to him who is everywhere, and the worſt as well as the beſt of men do live and move in him: But they are really nigh unto God, who do enjoy him; and they only enjoy him, whoſe natures are conformable to him

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in a way of love, goodneſs, and God-like perfections. We do not enjoy God by any groſs and external conjunction with him, but we enjoy him, and are nigh unto him "by an internal union; when a Divine "Spirit informeth and acteth our ſouls, "and derives a Divine Life into them, and "thorow them: And ſo a godly ſoul only is really and happily nigh unto God. Thus the Apoſtle *Paul*, I believe, was as nigh unto God as any man in the world, who did not only live and move in God, as all men do (though few underſtand it) but God did even live, and, as it were breathe in him; the very life that he lived was *by faith in the Son of God*, Gal. 2. 20. For though he walked *in* the fleſh, yet he did not walk *after* the fleſh, 2 *Cor.* 10. 3. And yet this gracious ſoul, even as all other believers, was at a diſtance from God, and that not ſo much by reaſon of his creatureſhip; for of that he doth not ſpeak (ſo the very Angels of God are at an infinite diſtance from God) but by reaſon of this mortal body, and animal life, which hindered him from being ſo nigh to God as his ſoul was capable to be, ——*whilſt we are in the body, we are abſent from the Lord*, *i. e.* at a great diſtance from God.

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1. We are diſtant from God as to that *Knowledge* which we ſhall have of him. Philoſophical Divines ſpeak of a threefold Knowledge, 1. κατ' οὐσίαν, an eſſential Knowledge of God. This is that unſpeakable light, whereby the Divine Nature comprehends its own eſſence, wherein God ſeeth himſelf. 2. κατ' ἐπιστήμην, by Science. This man is capable of in this life. But this kind of knowing of God by way of Science, is but a low and dry thing, common to good and bad, men and Devils; and is indeed the perfection of the *learned*, "more than of the *godly*. And this kind "of Knowledge of God, the glorified ſoul "will reckon but like a Fable, or a Parable, "when it ſhall be once ſwallowed up in "God, feaſting upon truth it ſelf, and "ſeeing God in the pure rayes of his own "divinity. 3. Κατὰ νόησιν, or by Intuition: this man cannot attain to in this life, in its perfection, becauſe it ariſes from a bliſsful union with God himſelf, which is in this animal ſtate imperfect. This in the Platonick phraſe is ἁπτὴ τοῦ νοητοῦ, a contact of God, and in Scripture language, a beholding of God face to face, which we are not capable of in this animal concrete ſtate. So may the anſwer of God to *Moſes* —

be underſtood, when he beſought God to ſhew him his glory, *Exod.* 33. 18. *i. e.* to imprint a diſtinct Idea of his Divine Eſſence upon his mind, *verſ.* 20. *No man can ſee me and live*; *i. e.* no man in this corruptible ſtate and animal life is capable of ſeeing me as I am, to apprehend my Divine Eſſence, to ſee my face. The Viſion of God is not in this life, but in the other; ſo that a man muſt dye before he can thus know God. This is the expoſition of Jewiſh Doctors, and our learned Country-men do approve it alſo. This bleſſed Knowledge of God we are at a diſtance from whilſt we are in this body: ſo the Apoſtle plainly, 1 *Cor.* 13. 12. *Now we ſee darkly as thorow a glaſs*, but the time will come when we ſhall ſee as we are ſeen, and know as we are known. Now our body principally hinders the operation of our minds, when they do exerciſe themſelves about the nature of God, whilſt it preſents its fancies, & groſs imaginations to the ſoul, ſo it becomes, as it were, a vail upon the face of the ſoul, draws a cloud, and caſts a miſt over its eyes, that it cannot diſcern diſtinctly, nor judge properly and ſpiritually. And with alluſion to this, that paſſage of the Apoſtle is proper and ſignificant, we ſee *as thorow a glaſs*,

"*glaſs*, which glaſs is indeed continually "ſullied and darkened whilſt we look into "it by the breathing of our animal fancies "and imaginations upon it. Not only thoſe ſtinking foggs of pride and ſelf-love, and other ſinful corruptions that do ariſe out of the ſoul it ſelf, do hinder our right perceptions of God, (as the earth ſends out vapors out of it ſelf, which ariſe and interpoſe between it ſelf and the Sun) but even the animal fancy caſts in its phantaſms and imaginations as a miſt before the eye of the ſoul, which through Divine Grace hath been ſomewhat enlightened, and cleared from its inbred ſinful humours. Though corruption in the mind be as a rheume in its eye, ſo that it cannot well ſee; yet that doth not hinder, but that the fancy by preſenting its unſpiritual imaginations, doth alſo caſt a miſt before it, that it cannot ſee well, nor judge rightly; and ſo it is either held in groſs ignorance, or lapſes into errour. But in the Regeneration this ſenſe either ſhall not be, or ſhall be pure and ſpiritual.

2. Whilſt we are in the body, we are diſtant from God, as to that *ſervice* which we ought to perform to him in the world. And herein it were endleſs to run thorow

all those outward duties which we owe unto God in the body; and to shew how the body becomes a hinderance either to them, or in them. Though the soul be made willing and forward, by a divine principle implanted in it, yet the body remains a body, a weak and sluggish instrument; and so it will be whilst it is animal; it will go down into the dust a *weak* body, 1 *Cor.* 15. 43. What man ever had a more willing and chearful heart than *Moses* the friend of God? Yet his hands were *heavy*, and ready to hang down, *Exod.* 17. 12. Shall I instance in the excellent duty of Preaching and Hearing? wherein the spirits of the most spiritual Preacher are soon exhausted; *the tongue of the learned* is ready to cleave to the roof of his mouth; the head is seized with dizziness; the heart with pantings; the organs of speech with weariness; and the knees with trembling; and the ears of the most devout hearers with heaviness; the eyes with sleepiness; and the whole body in a short time with weakness. Shall I instance in the noble duty of Prayer? wherein the pious soul goes out to God, but can scarce get its body to accompany it; and there the fancy distracts, the senses divert; and indeed all the members

bers are ready to play the *Truants*, if not the *Traitors* too: especially the brain, where the soul sits enthroned, is suddenly environed with a rude rout of sluggish vapours arising from the stomach, and being no longer able to defend it self against them, falls down dead in the midst of them: Insomuch that the poor soul is ready to wish sometimes with the sorrowful Prophet, *Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place, that I might leave my members, and go from them, for they are all an assembly of treacherous servants*: or wish that it were like its Saviour, who could leave his raw Disciples asleep, and go and pray apart, and come again unto them. Shall I instance in that high duty of sustaining Martydom, bearing persecutions for God? Come on my body, cryes the holy soul, come on to the stake; come my head, lay down thy self upon this block; come my body, compose thy self in this dark dungeon; come my feet, fit your selves into these stocks; come my hands, draw on these fetters, these Iron bracelets; come, come drink the cup that my Father gives thee. But oh how it follows to the stake! what shaking, shivering, trembling, and reluctancy may you see in the whole

ſtructure of it! The head hangs down, the eyes run over, the lips quaver, the ſhoulders pull back, the hands tremble, the knees knock together, and the whole fabrick is ready to tumble down, for fear of falling. Either to this (as ſome interpret) or to that duty of Prayer (as others) doth that of our Saviour refer, *Mark* 14. 38. *The ſpirit indeed is willing, but the fleſh is weak.* It ſeems the ſpirit of the weakeſt Chriſtian is ſtrong, though the body (as we have ſeen) of the ſtrongeſt Saint is weak: Though indeed it is not properly the weakneſs that is in the body, that I am to ſpeak to, but the influence that the body hath upon the ſoul to weaken that: for, whilſt the ſoul ſympathizes with the body, attends to it, ſpares it, pities it, it ſelf becomes almoſt ill affected to the ſervice of God. I am not ſo much blaming the body, becauſe it had need by reaſon of its ſlothfulneſs to be drawn on to dutie; but becauſe by its influences, it draws off the ſoul alſo from them: for ſo we find it by woful experience, that if the body do ſleep, the ſoul cannot wake; it cannot hear without the ear, nor ſee without the eyes; ſo that the bodyes wearineſs at long hands in the ſouls unwillingneſs; and

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the weakneſs of the one, grows to be the ſin of the other.

3. Whilſt we are in the body, we are at a diſtance from God, as to *communion* with him: we are eſtranged from fellowſhip with him; and this is indeed to be abſent from the Lord. Oh how many weary and uncomfortable dayes do poor Saints live at a great diſtance from their God, their Life, their Happineſs, whilſt they are in their worldly Pilgrimage, in their Cage of fleſh! Oh how many dayes do they forget God, and are apt to think that God hath forgotten them too! How do they live ſometimes, as it were, without God in the world, their ſouls being ſurfeited with carnal pleaſures, benummed with fears, frozen with ſelf-love, choaked with cares, ſtifled with griefs, and ſeem to have no more feeling of God their life, than a body in the duſt hath of the ſoul its life! Oh what a heavy yoke doth the poor ſoul draw under, when it plows and harrows to the fleſh, and cannot lift up its head to Heaven! Oh how is our intercouſe with God obſtructed, our beholding of him obſcured, our entertaining of him prevented, our enjoyment of him diſturbed and violated, our love to him deadned, and

his love to us damped; ours rendred infirm, and his rendred insensible, and all by this make-bate mortal flesh! Alas what uncertainties, and vicissitudes, what changing and tossings, turnings and windings are our poor pilgrim souls here exercised with! What breakings and piecings, reconciliations and fallings out, closing and parting, rising and falling; what ups and downs; what forwards and backwards doth the poor distressed soul experience in this animal state! The flourishing soul withers; the lofty soul languishes; the vigorous soul fainteth; the nimble soul flaggeth; the devout soul swooneth; the lively soul sickeneth, and is ready to give up the Ghost; and she that was a while ago resting and glorying in the arms of her Lord, anon lyes embracing a dunghil, and hath almost forgotten that ever she was happy: Her peace is violated, her rest is disturbed, her converse with Heaven interrupted, her incomes from God are few and insensible, her outgoings to him are few and lazy, and the rivers of her divine pleasures are almost dryed up. And all this, whilst she is in this body; and indeed a great part of it by reason of this body in which she is: The animal body keeps us

distant

distant from the Lord, that we cannot converse with him, mind him, enjoy him, live upon him, and unto him. The body being fitted only for this animal state, is ever drawing down the soul, when it would raise up it self in contemplation of, and communion with the blessed God. And so

1. The *Necessities* of the body do hinder the souls communion with the Lord. Not that the necessities of the body are simply in themselves to be blamed, but the caring for these doth so exercise the soul in this state, that it cannot attend upon God without distraction. Oh how much doth the necessary caring for meat and drink, food and physick; yea, the ordering of temporal affairs, estrange from communion and converse with God! so that the soul, like poor *Martha*, is cumbred with many cares, and busied with *much serving* in this house, and cannot attend so devoutly and entirely as it ought upon the Lord. If the body be pinched with pain, the soul cannot be at rest, but must needs look out for relief: If the body be pinched with hunger and thirst, the soul can take no rest, till it have found out a supply for it: If the one be sick, the other is sad; if the one be hungry or thirsty, the other seems to languish; like *Hippocrates*

pocrates his Twins that laught and cryed, lived and dyed together.

It is a wonderful myſtery, and a rare ſecret, how the ſoul comes to ſympathize with the body, and to have not only a knowledge, but, as it were, a feeling of its neceſſities; how theſe come to be conveyed to the ſoul, and how it comes to be thus affected with them. But we find it ſo: And indeed, to ſpeak truth, it ſeems neceſſary for the maintaining of this animal ſtate, that it ſhould be ſo, that the ſoul ſhould be, as it were, hungry, weary, ſick, and ſleep too together with the body: for "if our ſoul ſhould not know what it is to "be hungry, thirſty, cold, or ſick, or wea-"ry, but by a bare ratiocination, or a dry "ſyllogiſtical inference, without any more "eſpecial feeling of theſe neceſſities, it "would ſoon ſuffer the body to languiſh "and decay, and commit it wholly to all "changes and caſualties: neither would "our own body be any more to us, than "the body of a plant or of a ſtarr, which "we do many times view with as much "clearneſs, and contemplate with as much "contentment as we do our own. But in the mean time, the ſoul is diverted from its main employment, turned aſide from its communion

communion with God; not ſo much by providing ſomewhat for our bodyes to eat, and drink, and put on, which is lawful and needful, as our Saviour implyes, *Mat.* 6. 32. as by ſinking it ſelf into the body, being paſſionately and inordinately affected with its wants, and ſo being ſinfully thoughtful, as our Saviour intimateth in the ſame chapter, *verſ.* 31.

2. The *Paſſions* of the body do hinder the ſouls communion with the Lord. So powerful is the intereſt and influence that this body hath in and over the ſoul, that it fills it with deſires, pleaſures, griefs, joys, fears, angers, and ſundry paſſions. The body calls out the ſoul to attend upon its ſeveral paſſions, which I dare not ſay are ſinful in themſelves, as they firſt affect our ſouls, no more than it is our ſin that we are men: our bleſſed Saviour ſeems not to have been free from them, as grief, *Iſa* 53. 3. fear, *Heb.* 5 7. who yet was free from all ſin, 1 *Pet.* 2. 22. Nay, it ſeems neceſſary (as I ſaid before) conſidering the nature of this animal life, that the ſoul ſhould have the corporeal paſſions and impreſſions feelingly and powerfully conveyed to it, without which it could not expreſs a due benevolence to the body that belongs to it;

and

and indeed, were it not so, we cou'd not properly be said (in the Apostles phrase here) to be at home in the body; the soul would rather dwell *in domo alienâ quàm suâ*. But the soul being called out to attend upon these passions, is easily ensnared by them; for it can hardly exercise it self about them, but it slips insensibly into a sinful inordinacy. As for example: "The animal spirits "nimbly playing in the brain, and swiftly "flying from thence thorow the nerves "up and down the whole body, do raise "the fancy with mirth and chearfulness, "which we must not presently mistake for "the power of grace, nor condemn for the "working of corruption: So also when "the Gall empties its bitter juice into the "liver, and that mingles it self with the "blood there, it begets fiery spirits, which "presently fly up into the brain, and cause "impressions of anger. Now, though I dare not say, that the souls first sensating and entertaining of these passions is sinful, yet it is sadly evident that our souls being once moved by these undisciplin'd animal spirits, are very apt to sit upon, and cherish those passions of grief, fear, mirth, anger, and, as it were, to work them into it self, in an inordinate manner, and contrary to the

the dictates of reason, and so the will presently makes those sinful, which before were but meerly humane, or as one calls them, ζωὰ σωμάτων, the more blossomings or shooings forth of animal life within us. We see then in these particulars, that not only the depraved dispositions of the soul do keep us at a distance from God, but even this body also is a great hinderance to that knowledge of God which we shall attain to, that service of God which we might perform, and that sweet communion with him, which we shall enjoy. It is a clog to the soul that would run; a mist to the soul that would see clearly; a manacle to the soul that would work; a snare to the soul that would be free; a fetter to chain it to earthly and material things, and, as it were, a pinion to the wings of contemplation: More particularly, it is a hinderance to it, as to those three things which I have named: As to the souls knowledge of God, the body is an occasion of ignorance and errour: As to its serving of God, an occasion of distraction and wearinesse; lightnesse and triflingnesse; and as to its communion with God, an occasion of earthlinesse and sensuality. Now this distance which this body keeps the soul at from God might more

particularly

particularly appear in another way of explication, by observing the especial grievances that do arise to the soul from those three great animal faculties (if I may so speak.) The Senses, the Appetite, the Fancy.

1. The *Senses*, I mean the external senses of the body; seeing, hearing &c. These convey passions to the soul, upon which it insists and feeds with a sinful fondness and eagerness. Set open the eye, and it will set hard to convey some species to the soul of earthly objects, that shall justle the Ideas of God out of it. Set open the ear, and it will fill the soul with such a noise, and earthly tumult, that the secret whispers of the divine spirit cannot be heard. The like I may say of the rest: Oh how easily do these discompose the fixed soul, distract the devout soul, cast a mist before the contemplative soul, and hale down the raised soul from communion with Heaven to converse with earthly objects! *Ut vidi ut perii!* is the complaint of many a Christian, as well as it was of the Heathen. The souls of most men are quite sunk into their senses, and do nothing, but, as it were, lacky to them all their lives, and so the servants are on horseback, and Princes go on foot.

Though

Though the eye will never be ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor the ear with hearing; yet forſooth, theſe importunate ſuiters muſt be gratified: the eye muſt ſee what it will ſee, and the ear muſt hear what it will hear: nothing muſt be with-held from them, that theſe childiſh ſenſes do whine after. Theſe mens ſouls are indeed incarnate, ſwallowed up in their eyes, ears and mouths. But not only theſe, but even godly ſou's are often charmed and enſnared by their ſenſes; even they converſe not only *in* the body, but too much *with* it alſo; and it becomes as a *Dalilah*, to lull them aſleep, and bind them too. Good *Job* found his ſenſes ſo treacherous, that he was fain to make a covenant with them, *Job* 31. 1. And well if he could ſcape ſo too. The words are a Metaphor; for indeed the worſt of it is, that theſe ſenſes are not capable of any diſcipline; one cannot bring them into any covenant-terms: ſo that whilſt we have ſenſes, they will be treacherous; whilſt our eyes are in our heads, they will be wandring after forbidden objects.

2. The Appetite, the ſenſitive appetite, which is a faculty of the ſenſitive ſoul, whereby this animal man is ſtirred up to deſire and luſt after the things which his ſenſes have

have dictated to him. This bodily luſt following upon the neck of the former, becomes a greater ſnare to the ſoul: This reſtleſs ſuitor comes whining ever and anon to the ſoul for every trifle that the eye hath ſeen, or the ear heard, or the mouth hath taſted; and by it continual coming, and importunate crying, wearies her into an obſervance of it: As the fond child comes crying to the Mother for every knack and gaw that it hath ſeen upon the ſtalls, and ſhe, though ſhe cannot in judgment approve of the requeſt, yet either in fond indulgence, or for peace ſake, will condeſcend to purchaſe it. This is the Daughter of the Horſleech, that cryes continually, *Give, Give*: Why, what would it have? even any thing that it hath ſeen, or heard, or touched, or taſted; any thing that it ſees a fellow-creature to be poſſeſt of: And ſo indeed the Appetite doth not only enſnare the ſoul unto drunkenneſs and gluttony, but voluptuouſneſs, laſcivouſneſs, and all manner of ſenſuality. The evil of the ſenſual appetite appears in wantonneſs and laſciviouſneſs (whether real, verbal, or mental) in immoderate and inordinate trading, ingroſſing, ſporting, building, attiring, ſleeping, viſiting, as well as in eating and drinking. I will determine nothing

nothing concerning the first motions of the appetite, whereby it sollicits the will to fulfil it; only this, that if it sollicite to any thing simply and morally evil, it is sinful in that first act; and that at all times it ought carefully to be watcht, lest it seduce to intemperance in things lawful. But concerning the gratifying of the appetite, seeing there must be in us a sensitive appetite, whilst we are in this animal state, it is to be endeavoured, as far as may be, that we gratifie the appetite, not as it is a sensitive appetite, but under this notion, as the thing that it desires makes for our real good, and tends to the enjoyment of the supreme good: to eat and drink, not because we are hungry or thirsty, because the appetite desires it; but with reference to the main end, with respect to the highest good, that the body may be enabled, strengthened and quickened to wait upon the soul chearfully in the actions of a holy life. But this, man in his animal state cannot perfectly attain to, which shews, that the appetite doth keep us at a distance from God.

3. The *Fancy*; this also keeps a man at a distance from God, and hinders us in the knowledge and service of God, and interrupts the souls communion with God. This

is a busie and petulant faculty, or inward sense, and the soul doth readily sensate the passions of it, so that it doth frequently hinder its mental operations, and becomes a great snare. A working fancy (how much soever it is magnified by the wisdom of this world) is a mighty snare to the soul, except it work in a fellowship with right reason, and a sanctified heart: I am perswaded there is no greater burden in the world to a serious soul; especially in hot and dry constitutions, where it is commonly most pregnant, and most impatient of discipline. And, I confess, I have often wondred at the souls readiness to be so speedily affected with the fantasms and imaginations of it, and fondness to hug them so dearly. This indeed, if it be so far refined, as to present sober and solid imaginations to the mind, and to act in subservience to sanctified reason, is an excellent handmaid to the soul in many of her functions: But otherwise is a snare; as we have partly observed already, and may observe more, if we study the secrets of our own souls, and the mighty mysteries that are within us. And this doth not only ordinarily disturb, distract and hinder in ordinary duties, but even when the soul is

at the higheſt pitch of communion and contemplation, it aſſayes to pull it down to attend to its vain fantaſms; and indeed gives it many a grievous fall. I doubt not to affirm, that this is the moſt pernicious enemy of the three that I named to the ſouls happineſs, as might appear in many reſpects; I will only name one: It hath an advantage againſt us, which neither of the other two hath: It inſeſts us, and annoyes us ſleeping as well as waking. In ſleep, the ſenſes are lockt up, and the appetite is, for the moſt-part, ſilent from its begging; but then the fancy is as buſie and tumultuous as ever, forming and gathering imaginations, and thoſe are commonly wild and ſenſeleſs, if not worſe. The mind, in way of kindneſs and benevolence to the body, ſuſpends its own actings, whilſt the body takes its reſt in the night, and then the rude fancy takes its opportunity to wander at liberty, as being without its keeper, and acts to the diſturbance of the body; but thats not the worſt, for it becomes ſo tumultuous and impetuous ſometimes, as that it awakens the mind to attend upon its imaginations; and this the ſoul doth condeſcend to in an inordinate manner, and ſets the ſtamp of ſinfulneſs upon them, to its

own wounding. And now that I am ſpeaking of ſleep as a *Mantiſſa* to this diſcourſe, I cannot but obſerve, how this very thing alſo keeps us at a diſtance from God, in this animal ſtate. How is our communion with God interrupted by this! For herein we ceaſe, not only from the actions of an animal life, but commonly from the actions of a ſpiritual life too. What a great breach, what a ſad interciſion is there made in our converſe with God by this means! Such a poor happineſs it is, that we have in this world, that it is cut off, and ſeems, as it were, not to be one fourth part of our time: For indeed a happineſs that is not felt, deſerves not the name of happineſs. Some learned and active men have been aſhamed that they have ſlept away ſo much of their time, which was all too little for their ſtudyes and exploits: Ah poor Chriſtian, that, as it were, ſleeps away ſo much of his God, being as much eſtranged from him in the night, as though he had never converſed with him in the day; and in the morning when he awakes, cannot alwayes find himſelf with him neither; which is enough to make a poor Saint wiſh, either that he might have no need of ſleep, or that with the amorous

Spouſe,

Spouſe, *Cant.* 5. 2. Though he ſleep, his heart might wake perpetually.

We have ſeen in what ſenſe this mortal body keeps Believers abſent from the Lord, and in what reſpects it keeps them at a diſtance from God, even in this life, from the *Knowledge* of God, the *Service* of God, and *Communion* with him. Here then by way of Application;

1. We may ſee that it was for good reaſon that the bleſſed Apoſtle is confident, and willing to depart; nay, he groans within himſelf, deſiring that *mortality might be ſwallowed up of life*, as he ſpeaks, *v.* 4. I told you before, that theſe words did contain the reaſon or ground thereof; and by this time I hope you ſee that the reaſon is good, and the ground is ſufficient. What will the men of this world ſay? Will you perſwade us out of our life? Should any thing in the world make a man weary of his life? *Præſtat miſerum eſſe quam non eſſe*: The Apoſtle was ſure beſides himſelf, or he would never have fallen out with his own life: or elſe he was in a paſſion, and knew not what he ſaid: or elſe his life was bitter to him, by reaſon of the poor, afflicted, perſecuted condition that he lived in, and ſo he was become deſperate, and cared not

what became of him. No, none of these: The Apostle was in his right wits, and in a sober mind too. It was not a passion, or a fit of melancholly, but his judgement and choice upon good deliberation; and therefore you find him in the same mind elsewhere, *Phil.* 1. 23. *I desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.* Besides, he gives a reason for what he desires; now we know that passion is unruly and unreasonable. Neither was the Apostle besides himself; for he gives a good, solid and wise reason, —— *Whilst we are at home in the body, &c.* He will part with his life, rather than not be perfectly happy. For, whereas worldlings put such a high price upon life, and think that nothing should perswade men out of their lives: Its true indeed, if we speak properly, life is the perfection of the creature: The happiness of every thing is its life: *A living Dog is better than a dead Lion*, Eccles. 9. 4. But I may say to these, even as our Saviour said to that woman, in *Joh.* 4. 18. concerning her Husband; The life that we live here, is not our life. The union of the sensitive soul with the body, is indeed truly and properly the life of a beast, and its greatest happiness; for it is capable of no higher

higher perfection: But the union of the rational ſoul with God, is the nobleſt perfection of man, and his higheſt life: ſo that the life of a believing ſoul is not deſtroyed at death, but perfected. Neither was the Apoſtle weary of his life, becauſe of the adverſities of it. The Apoſtle was of a braver ſpirit ſure than any Stoick; he durſt live, though he rather deſired to dye. All the conflicts he endured with the world, never wrung ſuch a ſigh from him, as the conflict that he had with his own corruptions did, *Rom.* 7. 24. *O wretched man, &c.* All the perſecutions in the world never made him groan ſo much, as the burden of his fleſh doth here, and his great diſtance from the Lord. A godly ſoul can converſe with perſecuting men, and a tempting Devil, can handle briars and thorns, can grapple with any kind of oppreſſions and adverſities in the fleſh without deſpondency, ſo long as it finds it ſelf in the boſome of God, and in the arms of Omnipotence. But when it begins to conſider where it is, how far it is from its God, its life, and the happy ſtate that God hath prepared it for, then it cannot but groan within it ſelf, and be ready with *Peter*, to caſt it ſelf out of the ſhip, to get to its God;

to land it ſelf in eternity. Neither indeed (to ſpeak truly) is it only the ſenſe of ſin againſt God, which ſets the godly ſoul a going: For, though it muſt be confeſt, that this is a heavy burden upon the ſoul, yet the Apoſtle makes no complaint of this here, but only of his diſtance from God, that neceſſary diſtance from God that the body kept him at.

2. See here the excellent ſpirit of true Religion. Godly ſouls do groan after an unbodyed eſtate, not only becauſe of their ſins in the body, but even becauſe of the neceſſary diſtance at which the body keeps them from God. We may ſuppoſe a godly ſoul at ſome time to have no manner of affliction in the world to grieve him, no ſin unpardoned, unrepented of to trouble him; yet for all this he is not at perfect reſt; he is burdened and groans within himſelf, becauſe he is at ſuch a diſtance from that abſolute good, whom he longs to know more familiarly, and enjoy more fully than he doth yet, or than is allowed to mortal men: And though nothing elſe ayl him, yet the conſideration of this diſtance makes him cry out, Oh *when ſhall I come and appear before God!* be wholly ſwallowed up in him, ſee him as he is, and converſe with

with him face to face. Bare innocency, or freedom from sin, cannot satisfie that noble and large spirit that is in a truly and God-like soul; but that spirit of true goodness (being nothing else but an efflux from God himself) carryes the soul out after a more intimate union with that Being from whence it came: God dwelling in the soul, doth by a secret mighty power draw the soul more and more to himself. In a word, a godly soul, that is really toucht with the sense of divine sweetness and fulness, and impreſt with divine goodness and holiness, as the wax is with the stamp of the seal, could not be content to dwell for ever in this kind of animal body, nor take up an eternal rest in this imperfect mixed state; though it could converse with the world without a sinful sullying of it self; but must needs endeavour still a closer conjunction with God; and leaving the chase of all other objects, pant and breath not only after God alone, but after more and more of him; and not only when it is under the sense of sin, but most of all when it is under the most powerful influences of divine grace and love, cry out with *Paul*, Oh, *who will deliver me out of this body?*

3. Suffer me from hence to expostulate a little,

little, to expoſtulate with Chriſtian ſouls about their unſeemly temper. Doth this animal life, and mortal body, keep us at ſuch a diſtance from our God, our happineſs? Why are we then ſo fond of this life and mixed ſtate? Why do we ſo pamper this body? Why ſo anxiouſly ſtudious to keep it up, ſo dreadfully afraid of the ruines of it? If we take the Apoſtles words in the firſt ſenſe that I named, then I may ask with him in the firſt verſe; *Know we not, that if our earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, we had a building of God, a houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens*? or *verſ.* 8. Why are we not willing rather to be *abſent from the body*, and to be *preſent with the Lord*? If we take them in the latter ſenſe, as this animal body is an hinderance to the ſouls knowledge of, and communion with God, then I ask concerning this, as the Apoſtle doth concerning rich men, *James* 2. 6. Why do ye pamper, prize, honour, dote upon this body? Doth not this body oppreſs you, diſtract you, burden you, clog you, hinder you? Doth not this body interpoſe between the *Sun of Righteouſneſs*, between the *Father of Lights*, and your ſouls that ſhould ſhine with a light and glory borrowed

rowed from him; even as the dark body of the earth interpoſes between the Sun and Moon, to eclipſe its light? Why are we not rather weary, that we are in the body? Surely there are ſome objections, ſome impediments to the ſouls longing after its happy ſtate, which I ſhall come to anon: But I doubt alſo, that there is ſomething that chains the ſoul to this animal life; ſome cords in this earthly tabernacle, that tye up the ſoul in it: but I cannot well imagine what they ſhould be. Say not, There is ſomething of God to be enjoyed in this life, which makes it pleaſant: For, although this be true, yet, I am ſure, God gives nothing of himſelf to a ſoul, thereby to clog it or cloy it. Did *Moſes* ſend for ſome Cluſters of the Land of *Canaan* into the wilderneſs, think ye, that the people might ſee and taſte the fruits, and ſit ſtill, and be ſatisfied, and ſay, Oh it is enough; we ſee that there are pleaſant things in that Land, we will never come at it? or, did he not do it rather that they might make the more haſte to poſſeſs themſelves of it? Will any man ſay, Away, I will have no more land, no more mony, I have ſome already? Can a godly ſoul ſay, God hath given me an earneſt, I deſire no more? No,

no,

no; but the report that a Christian hears of a rest remaining, a happy life remaining for it, and the chariots of divine graces that he sees God hath sent out into his soul to convey it thither, make him cry out, not with *Jacob*, *Gen.* 45. 28. *It is enough*; Joseph *my Son is yet alive, I will go and see him before I dye:* But oh this is not enough, this report is not enough; it is not enough that I taste some of the good things of the Land; it is not enough that I see these carriages sent out for me; it is not enough that my soul hath an happy and honourable life prepared for it; I see it indeed before I dye, but I will also dye, that I may see it better, and enjoy it more. But I doubt there is some earthly tye, even upon the heavenly soul that chains it to this present animal body: But, sure I am, that whatsoever it is, it is but a weak one. Is there any worldly accommodation, any creature-toy, that should in reason step between a soul and its God? Is this life sweet, because there are creature-comforts to be enjoyed? And will it not be a better life, when creature-comforts shall not be needed? And are the pleasures of this body, the comforts of this life, the flattering smiles, or fawning embraces of the creature, such a mighty

contentment

contentment to a ſoul, to a ſoul acquainted with the higheſt good? Haſt thou, O my ſoul, any ſuch full and ſatisfying entertainment in thy Pilgrimage, as to make thee loath to go home? Wilt thou hide thy ſelf with *Saul* among the *ſtuff*, among the lumber of the world, when thou art ſought for to be crowned? Are the empty ſounds of popular applauſe, the breaking bubbles of ſecular greatneſs, the ſhallow ſtreams of ſenſual pleaſures, the ſmiling dalliance, and liſping eloquence of wives and children, the flying ſhadows of creature-refreſhments, the momentany flouriſhes of worldly beauty and bravery, Are theſe meat for a ſoul? Are theſe the proper object, or the main happineſs of ſuch a divine thing, as an immortal ſoul? Why are we not rather weary of this body, that makes us ſo weary of heavenly employment? Why do we not rather long to part with that life, that parts us from our life? And inſtead of the young Apoſtles *It is good to be here*, cry out with the ſweet ſinger, *Oh that one would give me the wings of a Dove, that I might fly away and be at reſt!*

And now methinks, by this time, I might be ſomewhat bold, and form my remaining diſcourſe into an Exhortation. But, it may be,

— we would have the world to believe that we have layd up our happineſs in God, and that we are troubled that we are ſo far from him; and yet we are afraid leſt that ſhould be taken out of the way that keeps us at a diſtance from him: We flatter our ſelves that we are in haſte for Heaven, and yet we are dreadfully afraid leſt our rubs ſhould be taken out of the way. How do theſe things hang together? Are we perſwaded, that if this earthly houſe of our tabernacle were taken down, we have a building not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens? If not, Why do we yet call our ſelves Chriſtians? But I think I may take it for granted, we are all ſo perſwaded: And if ſo, Why are we ſo afraid it ſhould be taken down? I am loath to ſpeak what I think; yet methinks the entire and ardent love which we either do bear, or ought to bear to the Bleſſed God, and union and communion with him, ſhould caſt out this fear: This is ſuitable to Scripture, 1 *Joh.* 4 18. I will not diſpute how far ſinful fear for the body may carry a godly ſoul; the further, the worſe I am ſure: But if any will needs be ſo indulgent to his own paſſions, and ſo much an enemy to his own peace, as to encourage himſelf

to

to fear (which is a ſtrange thing) from the example of *Abraham*, denying his wife; or *Peter*, denying his Lord; let him compare the iſſue, and then let me ſee whether he dare go and do likewiſe: But if that will not fright you from fear, chew upon theſe two Conſiderations.

1. I pray you ſeriouſly diſpute the matter with your ſelves, how far fear of ſickneſs and death may conſiſt with that ardent thirſt after union and perfect communion with the Bleſſed God, with which we ought to be poſſeſt.

2. Diſpute ſeriouſly how far it can ſtand with the ſincerity of a Chriſtian. God hath not left us in the dark, as to this matter. I will turn you to a Text or two, which, methinks, ſhould ſtrike cold to all ſlaviſh trembling Profeſſors, *Prov.* 28. 1. *Job* 15. 20, 21. *The wicked travelleth with pain all his dayes, a dreadful ſound is in his ears*: They are the words of *Eliphaz* indeed, but they do agree with the words of God himſelf, *Iſa.* 33. 14. *The ſinners in* Sion *are afraid, fearfulneſs hath ſurprized the hypocrites*: When I read over theſe Texts, I cannot but pray, and cry, O my ſoul, come not you into the number of the wicked, and be not united into the aſſembly of Hypocrites!

If you bring up this *ſervant* delicately from a child, you ſhall have him become your *Son* at length, yea, your Maſter. If you do by your bodyes, as the fond King did by his Son *Adonijah*, 1 *King.* 1. 6. never diſpleaſe it, never reprove it, never deny it; it will do with you in time as he did, raiſe ſeditions in your ſoul. Go on and pleaſe, and pamper, and cocker your bodyes, and it will come to this at length, that you muſt deny them nothing; you muſt *give* whatſoever a whining appetite will crave, *go* whither your gadding ſenſes will carry you, and *ſpeak* whatſoever wanton fancy will ſuggeſt. Doth not the body it ſelf ſet us at a ſufficient diſtance from God; but we muſt eſtrange our ſelves more from him by pleaſuring it, ſpend the time that ſhould be for God, in decking, trimming, adorning it? When you cram this, you feed a Bird that will pick out your eyes; you nouriſh a Traitor, when you gratifie this *Adonijah*. In a word, Is it not enough that we do all carry fire in our boſomes, but we muſt alſo blow it up into a flame; *Nay, my Brethren, do not ſo fooliſhly.*

And now, methinks, by this time, I may venture upon an Exhortation; by degrees at leaſt.

1. *Watch*

1. *Watch againſt the Body.* You have heard how the ſenſes, appetite and fancy become a ſnare to the ſoul's living unto, and converſing with God: Now then, if you ſeriouſly deſign communion with Heaven, if you placed your happineſs in the knowledge and enjoyment of that ſupreme and eternal good, it becomes you to watch againſt all things that may diſtract or divert you from it, or make you fall ſhort of the glory of God. Men that live upon earthly deſigns, whoſe great ambition it is to be great in the world, do not only uſe the moſt effectual means, and take the moſt direct courſes to accompliſh thoſe deſigns, and attain thoſe ends, but do continually ſuſpect, and diligently watch againſt all the moths that would corrupt, the ruſt that would conſume, the thieves that would plunder their treaſures; and, in a word, againſt all poſſible hinderances, defraudations, and diſappointments: So will we ſuſpect and watch ſure againſt all enemies and traitors to our ſouls, if we live here upon eternal deſigns, if our ambition be to be great in God alone. And the more eminent the danger is, the more will we watch. Have you not found by experience, which of theſe three have been moſt prejudicial to

your communion with God? If not, you have not been so studious to know the state, nor pursue the happiness of your own souls as you might: If so, then watch against that most of all, which you have found to be most injurious. For it ordinarily comes to pass, either by the difference of constitutions, or difference of temptations, or different wayes of living, or some other thing, that Gods children are more ensnared by some one of these than other. Well, be sure to watch and pray, and strive more especially against the more especial enemies of your souls.

2. *Live above the body:* above bodily enjoyments, ornaments, excellencies. Though these bodily enjoyments be never so sweet, these bodily ornaments never so glorious, yet is not your happiness in these. Certainly they live to their loss, who live upon the excellencies of their own souls, whether natural or supernatural; they deprive themselves of the infinite glory, fulness and sufficiency that is in the Blessed God, who take up their happiness in these: Much more do they pinch and impoverish their own souls, who live upon bodily ornaments, or excellencies; wherein many inferiour creatures do excel them; the Rose

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in beauty, the Sun in brightneſs, the Lion in ſtrength, the Stagg in ſwiftneſs, &c. If a woman were as lovely as the morning, *fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun:* if a man were full of perſonal grace and majeſty, *terrible as an Army with banners*; yet were not their happineſs in theſe accompliſhments. Nay, which is worſe, theſe ornaments ſtand between us and our happineſs. When you begin therefore at any time fondly to admire any of theſe bodily excellencies, then think with your ſelves, Oh but all theſe do not make my ſoul happy: Nay, this beautiful outſide muſt ſtink, and be deformed; theſe fair and flouriſhing members muſt wither in the duſt; this active, ſtrong and graceful body, muſt be buryed in diſgrace and weakneſs, before I can attain to entire and perfect happineſs. This conſideration will advance us to live above the body.

3. *Be content to be unbodyed for a time.* Is it true, that we can no otherwiſe be happy, no otherwiſe be preſent with God, know him familiarly, enjoy him perfectly and entirely? cannot we get to him, except we go thorow the duſt? Be it ſo then; be content to be unbodyed for a time. *Occidat modo imperet*, could the Heathen ſay

concerning her Son; much rather may a Christian say concerning his Father, Let him slay me, so my soul may but reign with him, which is by his reigning in it; Let him kill me, so he will but fill me; Let him draw me thorow the dust of the earth, so he will but draw me out of this dust of the world, so he will but draw me nigh unto himself, and bring me into a full and inseparable conjunction with my Lord! Methinks I need not use many arguments to perswade a soul that is feelingly overpowered, mastered, ravished with the infinite beauty, goodness, glory and fulness of his God, to be willing to quit a dusty tabernacle for a time, wherein it is almost swallowed up, to depart, and to be entirely swallowed up in him. Nay, suppose a Christian in the lowest form, who hath but chosen God for his highest good and only happiness (as every sincere Christian hath) methinks he should have learnt this lesson, to comply with that infinite, perfect will, that governs both him and the whole world: I cannot conceive a godly soul without the subduing of self-will; nor suppose a sincere Saint void at least of the habit of self-resignation. Therefore I will add no more concerning this, but rise a step higher.

4. *Long*

4. *Long after an unbodyed ſtate*, deſire to depart, and to be with the Lord, groan within your ſelves to have mortality ſwallowed up of life; in which temper you find the holy Apoſtle. To be *content* to dye, is a good temper, a temper ſcarce to be found (I think) in any wicked man; not from a right principle, I am ſure: But, methinks, its no very great thing in compariſon of what we ſhould labour to attain to. Think on't a little; what a ſtrange kind of cold uncouth phraſe it is, Such a man is content to be happy! Men are not ſaid to be content to be rich, but covetous; not willing to be honoured, but *ambitious*: And why ſhould it only be content to be with God? I am perſwaded there is no ſhew nor ſemblance of ſatisfactory bliſs and happineſs for a ſoul, a noble immortal nature, but only in the ſupreme eſſential, perfect, abſolute good, the bleſſed and eternal good: And, ſhould not this noble active Being be carryed out with vehement longings after its proper and full happineſs, as well as this earthly ſluggiſh body is carryed with reſtleſs appetite after health, and ſafety, and liberty? Why ſhould a ſoul alone be content to be happy, when all other things in the world, do ſo ardently court, and vehemently

mently purſue their reſpective ends, and ſeveral perfections? Certainly if the bleſſed and glorious God ſhould diſplay himſelf in all his beauty, and open all his infinite treaſures of goodneſs, and ſweetneſs and fulneſs within the view of a ſoul, it could not but be raviſhed with the object, earneſtly preſs into his preſence, *ruere in amplexus*, and with a holy impatience throw it ſelf into his arms: There would be need of ſetting bounds to the Mount, to keep it from breaking thorow unto the Lord: what is ſaid of the Queen of the South, when ſhe had heard the wiſdom, and ſeen the glory of *Solomon*, 2 *Chron.* 9. 4. would be more true of a Chriſtian, there would be *no more ſpirit left* in him. Some have therefore obſerved the wiſdom of God in engaging the ſoul in ſo dear a union with the body, that it might care for it, and not quit it: Yea, the Heathen obſerved the wiſdom of God in concealing the happy ſtate of a ſeparated ſoul; that ſo men might be content to live out their time, *victuroſque Dii celant, ut vivere durent, Felix eſſe mori.* But alas, we ſee but darkly as thorow a glaſs, and our affections towards God are proportionable to our apprehenſions of him; theſe are dark, and therefore thoſe are dull.

dull. And oh would to God they were but indeed proportionable! for then we ſhould love him only, if not earneſtly; and deſire him entirely, if not ſufficiently. Conſider what I have hinted, concerning the happineſs of the ſoul in the enjoyment of God, and what I have more fully demonſtrated concerning the bodyes hindering of it, and keeping it at a diſtance; and then argue, Is happineſs the main end of every Being? Muſt not this ſoul then, being a noble and immortal nature, needs look out for ſome high and noble happineſs, ſuitable to its excellent ſelf? Can that be any where, but in the enjoyment of the higheſt and uncreated good? And can this never be attained whilſt we are in this animal ſtate, in this mortal body, that keeps at ſuch a diſtance? Oh why then do we not look out after ſo much enjoyment of this bleſſed God, as we are now capable of, and long after a departure hence, that we may enjoy him freely and fully, and be eternally happy in him! oh be not only content, but even covetous.

But what, ſhall the ſoul break the cage that ſhe may take her flight? God forbid! How can he pretend to be a lover of God, who is not formed into his will, ſubject to his

his ordination, content to abide in the ſtation that he hath allotted him? But if we may not break it to eſcape, yet methinks it may be ſafe enough, with ſubmiſſion to wiſh it were broken: If we may not with *Saul*, *diſſolve* our ſelves, yet with *Paul*, we may *deſire to be diſſolved*. The perfection that the moſt Chriſtians attain to, is but to *deſire to live*, and be *content to dye*: Oh, conſider what I have ſaid in this matter, and invert the order of thoſe words in your hearts, *Be content to live, deſire to dye.*

But what, would you have us pray for death? Anſwer, I ſpeak not of a formal praying either for one or other. What the Apoſtle ſpeaks of the greateſt of ſins, 1 *Joh.* 5. 16. I am ready to ſay of this ſtate of freedom from all ſin, *I do not ſay that ye ſhould pray for it.* You will tell me that *David* and *Hezekiah* prayed for life: And I could tell you that *Elijah* prayed for death, 1 *King.* 19 4. he was indeed *a man ſubject to paſſions*, James 5. 17. but I believe this was none of them. But I will not enveigle my ſelf in any controverſie: Methinks the ſad conſideration layd before your eyes, whilſt we are in the body, we are abſent, diſtant from the Lord, ſhould wring out an *O wretched man that I am, &c.* or an *I deſire*

to

to be diſſolved; or if not words, yet at leaſt a groan after immortality, with our Apoſtle here —— *We groan within our ſelves that mortality may be ſwallowed up of life.*

But can a ſoul poſſibly long for the *deſtruction* of the body? Philoſophy indeed tells us that it cannot. Be it ſo: yet I'm ſure Divinity teaches, that a ſoul may long after the redemption of the body; the redemption of it from this kind of animal, corruptible enſnaring condition that it is now in, *Rom.* 8. 23. —— *We groan within our ſelves, waiting for the redemption of our body.* If we cannot wiſh to be *unclothed*, yet we may long to be *clothed upon*, *verſ.* 4. of this chapter: At leaſt, methinks, the Heathen ſhould not out-do us, who could ſay, *Mori nolo, ſed me mortuum eſſe nihil curo.*

But, will all cry, Oh if we were ſure of intereſt in it, of pardon of ſin, of truth, of grace, of eternal life, then we could freely leave all. Anſw.

1. That is, you would live to be more holy before you dye: you are not yet holy enough. No, nor never ſhall be till you dye. If you long after holineſs long to be with God then; for that is a ſtate of perfect

fect holineſs. To deſire to live, upon pretence of being more holy, is a meer fallacy, a contradiction. But, it may be, this is not the meaning of the Objection: Therefore

2. A not having of what we would have, is not an excuſe for not doing what we ſhould do. It is our duty to rejoyce in the Lord, *Phil.* 4. 4. which our not having of aſſurance, doth not exempt us from; though, if we have aſſurance, we might indeed rejoyce the more. But to take off this plea at once.

3. Our earneſt longings after a full and perfect enjoyment of God, and ſo our breathings after an immortal ſtate doth not depend upon our aſſurance; but indeed aſſurance rather depends upon that. I doubt we are commonly miſtaken in the nature of aſſurance; and, it may be, are in a wrong manner curious about the *ſigns* of Chriſts *appearing* in our ſouls. For, certainly a well grounded aſſurance of the love of God, doth moſt diſcover and unfold it ſelf in the growth of true godlineſs in the ſoul: Now the love of God, and an earneſt deſire to be like unto him, and to be with him, is the better half of all religion, *Mat.* 22. 37, 38. ſo that it rather ſeems that

that aſſurance ſprings up from this frame of ſoul, than that this ariſes out of aſſurance. If aſſurance be the thing that you deſire, get your ſouls joyned to God in a union of affections, will, and ends, and then labour and long to be cloſer to him, liker to him, perfectly holy and happy in him, and be ye aſſured that Chriſt is in you of a truth: For theſe mighty works which he hath wrought, theſe divine breathings, theſe holy pantings after him do bear witneſs of him.

4. Whether ever you come to that feeling knowledge, that powerful ſenſe of your ſtate or no, which you call aſſurance, yet know, that it is your duty to long after immortality. We are wont to call aſſurance the priviledge of ſome few; but the Scripture makes this temper that I am ſpeaking of, the duty of all Believers, which I do the rather name, becauſe I find few Profeſſors of this temper; and indeed but few that are willing to believe that they ought to be. Our Saviour calls all Believers to as much in effect as I do, *Luk.* 21. 28. *Look up and lift up your heads, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh*: whereby is not meant a bare poſture and ſpeculation, but joy and longing are required by that

that phraſe, ſay the Dutch Annotat. See alſo *Rev.* 22.17. Conſider further (which, methinks, ſhould ſtrike cold to the hearts of cold-hearted Profeſſors) that this very temper is made one of the greateſt characters of true and ſincere Saints: I do not know of any one oftner named; See *Rom.* 8.23. *We groan within our ſelves, waiting for the redemption of our body*, 2 Tim. 4. 8. *The Lord ſhall give the Crown to them that love his appearing*, Tit. 2. 13. We ſhould live godly in this preſent world, *looking for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, 2 Pet. 3. 12. What manner of perſons ought we to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs, *looking for, and haſtening to the coming of the day of God!* Jude 21. Keep your ſelves in the love of God, *looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life.* Do all theſe plain and pathetical Scriptures ſtand for cyphers in your eye? Methinks they ſhould not. But not to ſtand upon the proof of it to be a duty, it matters not whether there be an expreſs command for it or no: This that I am ſpeaking of, is not ſo much the duty of godly perſons, as the very nature, genius and ſpirit indeed of godlineſs it ſelf. Methinks

thinks a godly ſoul, that is truly toucht with divine goodneſs, influenced by it, and impreſt with it, as the Needle is with the Loadſtone, muſt needs ſtrive powerfully within it ſelf to be in conjunction with it: A holy ſoul, that after all its weariſome defeats, and ſhameful diſappointments in the creature, finds its ſelf perfectly matcht with this infinite, full, and perfect object, muſt certainly and neceſſarily be carryed, without any other argument, with fervent longings after union to it, and communion with it. The Spouſe might ſay concerning Chriſt, as he concerning her. *Cant.* 6. 12. *Or ever I was aware, my ſoul made me like the chariots of Aminadab.* And every godly ſoul may in ſome degree ſay with that Spouſe, *Cant.* 5. 4, 5. *My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him: I roſe up, &c.* Tell me, friends, How can Divine Grace, that Well of living water in the ſoul, chuſe but ſpring up into eternal life? *John* 4. 14. I doubt not to affirm, that that which is of God in the ſoul, muſt needs carry the ſoul after God: as it belongs to Heaven, ſo it will be longing towards Heaven. That which is of a divine original, muſt needs have a divine tendency; that which is of divine

extraction, will have in it a divine *attraction*, and perfue a divine *perfection*, *Col.* 3. 1. That divine life and spirit that runs thorow godly souls, doth awaken and exalt in some measure all the powers of them into an active and chearful sympathy with that absolute good that renders them compleatly blessed. Holiness and purity of heart will be attracting God more and more to it self; and the more pure our souls are, and the more separate from earthly things, the more earnestly will they endeavour the neareſt union that may be with God: and so by consequence, methinks they must needs in some sense desire the removal of that animal life, and dark body that stands in their way: for they know that that which now letteth, will let (such is the unchangeable nature of it, till it be layd in the dust) till it be taken out of the way. The thirsty King did but cry for water of the Well of *Bethlehem*, and his Champions broke thorow the Host of the Philistines, and fetcht it, 2 *Sam.* 23. 15. And will ye not allow the thirsty soul, if not to *break thorow* to fetch it, yet at least to *break out* into an *Oh that one would give me to drink* of the living water, of the fountain of grace, and peace, and love? Will ye allow hunger

to

to break down *ſtone-walls*? and will ye neither allow the hungry ſoul to break down theſe *mud-walls*, nor to wiſh within it ſelf that they were broken down? In a word then, give me leave earneſtly to preſs you to an earneſt preſſing after perfect fruition of, and eternal converſe with God, and to change the Apoſtles words, *Heb.* 12. 1. Seeing we are compaſſed about with ſo great a divine light, and glory, and brightneſs, let us be willing and deſirous to lay aſide this weight of fleſh, and this body that ſo eaſily reſiſts us with ſins and ſnares, and run with eagerneſs to the object that is ſet before us. *Amen, Amen.*

Draw me, we will run after thee.

THE Angelical Life.

Mat. 22. 30.

—Are as the Angels of God in Heaven.

THE Doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the great things of Christian Religion, as they were accounted a strange thing by all the world, when they were first publisht and preacht: so indeed by none less entertained, or rather more opposed, than by the wisest of men living in that age, *viz. Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees*; who were the *disputers of this world*, as the Apostles phrase is, 1 *Cor.* 1. 20. A thing of

wonderful observation, not only to us in our day, but even to our blessed Lord himself in the dayes of his flesh, who fetches the cause of it from Heaven, and adores the infinite Wisdom of God in it, *Mat.* 11. 25. Amongst other set Disputations that the Sadducees held with our Saviour, this in this chapter is very famous; where they dispute against the Resurrection of the dead, by an argument fetcht *ab absurdo*, *vers.* 25. grounded upon an instance of a woman that had been married to seven Husbands successively: Now, say they, if there be a Resurrection, whose Wife shall she be then? our Saviour answers by destroying the ground of their argument, and shewing that they disputed upon a false supposition: for, saith he, *In the Resurrection there shall be no marrying*, but men shall be as the Angels of God. In which words this Doctrine is plainly layd down (for I shall not meddle with the Controversie.)

Doct. *That the glorified Saints shall be as the Angels of God in Heaven.* The other Evangelists do lay down the same truth, as you may find, *Mark* 12. 25. *Luk.* 20. 36. In the explication of which point, I will shew 1. *Negatively*, wherein the Saints shall not be like the Angels. 2. *Affirmatively*,

tively, wherein they shall be like unto them; or, as St. *Luke* hath it, *equal* to them.

1. *Negatively, The glorified Saints shall not be like the Angels in essence:* The Angelical essence, and the rational soul are, and shall be different. Souls shall remain souls still, keep their own essence: The essence shall not be changed; souls shall not be changed into Angelical essences.

2. *They shall not be wholly spirits, without bodyes*, as the Angels: The spirits of just men now made perfect, are more like to the Angels in this sense, than they shall be after the Resurrection: For now they are spirits without bodyes; but the Saints shall have bodyes; not such as now (so corruptible, so crazy) not in any thing defective, not needing creature-supplyes; But incorruptible, glorious bodyes, in some sense spiritual bodyes; which are described by three characters, 1 *Cor.* 15. 42, 43. *Incorruptible* (somewhat more than immortal) *glorious, powerful.* Neither doth their having bodyes any whit abate of their perfection or glory, nor render them inferior to the Angels: for even the glorious Redeemer of the world, hath a body, who is yet superior to the Angels; and he shall change the vile bodyes of the Saints,

and make them like unto his glorious body, *Phil.* 3. *ult.*

3. Neither have we any ground to believe, that the Saints shall be altogether *equal to the Angels in dignity and glory*: But rather, that as man was at first made a little lower than the Angels; so that he shall never come to be exalted altogether so high as they: for it seemeth, that the natural capacity of an Angel, is greater than of a man, and so shall continue; for they are distinct kinds of creatures. As a beast cannot become so wise and intelligent as a man; for then he would cease to be a beast: so neither can a man become so large and capable as an Angel; for then he would cease to be a man.

2. *Affirmatively*, The glorified Saints shall be like the Angels of God in Heaven; first, In their *qualities*; that is,

1. In being *pure and holy*; whether they shall be equal to them in positive holiness, or no, I know not: whether they shall understand, and know, and love God, in all degrees, as much as the Angels: It seems rather that they shall not; because, as I said before, their capacity shall not be so large. But if in this they be not altogether equal to the Angels, yet it implyes no imperfection

fection: for they shall be positively holy as far as their nature is capable; and so shall be perfect in their kind, *Heb.* 12. 23. *The spirits of just men made perfect*: They shall in this be like unto the Angels, if not equal to them; yea like unto God himself in it; *Be ye holy as I am holy*, 1 Pet. 1. 15. Mat. 5. *ult.* But as to negative holiness, the Saints shall be even equal to the Angels of God in Heaven, *i.e.* they shall have no more sin, no more corruption than they have. They shall be as perfectly freed from all iniquities, imperfections, and infirmities, as the Angels. What can be cleaner than that which hath no uncleanness at all in it? Why, so clean shall all the Saints be, *Rev.* 21. 27. *No unclean thing shall enter into Heaven.* They shall be without all kind of *spot or blemish*, Ephes. 5. 27. which is a perfect negative holiness: more cannot be said of the Angels in this respect. As branches of this,

2. As the holy Angels do reverence the Divine Majesty, *Isa.* 6. 2, 3. they cover their faces with their wings, crying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord of Hosts; so shall the glorified Saints. You may see what sweet harmony they make, consenting together to give all the glory of all to God, *Rev.* 7. 9, 11, 12. The Saints stood and cryed, *Salvation*

vation to our God who sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb: The Angels stood round about saying *Amen, Amen.*

3. In their readiness to do the will of God, and execute his commands; therefore the Angels are described to have wings, *Isa.* 6. 2. *with twain they did fly*. How God shall please to imploy Angels or Saints in the world to come, is not for us to enquire: But they shall be alike ready to do his will, and serve his pleasure, whatever it shall be. Even whilst the Saints are imperfect on earth, they can cry, *Here am I, send me*, Isa. 6. 8. How much more ready shall they be then, when all their fetters are knockt off!

4. They shall be as the Angels in their *chearful* and *unwearied* execution of the will of God: So the Angels are, and so shall the Saints be. The Spirit shall be then *more* willing, and the Flesh shall be *no more* weak, as it is now; for when it is raised again, it shall be in *power*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 43. More things of this nature might be added: but I pass lightly over them, because, although they be true, yet they are not principally lookt at in this Text: therefore I come to the second thing wherein the glorified Saints shall be like unto the Angels, and that is; 2. In

2. In their *way of living*. They shall be like the Angels, *i. e.* saith one truly, ἰσαγγέλως βιῶντες, living like the Angels: How is that? our Saviour tells us, Neither marrying, nor being given in marriage: it is added presently in *Luk.* 20. 36. *For neither can they dye any more*: If there be no dying, there will be no need of propagation, if no need of propagation, then why should they marry? The Angels are single, and know no other conjunction, but with God in a spiritual manner: no more shall the Saints. But what great matter is that to be like the Angels in? what perfection is that? Many Saints, yea and sinners too upon earth, are so like the Angels, nay, and the Devils too. Therefore you must know that our Saviour under this phrase of not marrying, &c. doth comprehend all manner of *creature-converse*, all kind of living upon, and delighting in the creature, by a *Synecdoche* of the part, as is ordinary in Scripture; *I have not given upon usury*, saith the Prophet, yet the people curse me, *Jer.* 15. 10. *i. e.* I have had no dealing in the world, no negotiation: By one kind he understands the whole, *Ezek.* 25. 41. where, by eating their fruits, and drinking their milk, is understood the

possessing

poſſeſſing of all that was theirs: And in many other places, the Spirit of God uſes this Tropical way of ſpeaking.

The Angels of God neither marry, nor are given in marriage, *i. e.* they live not upon any created good, delight not in any created comfort; but live entirely upon God, converſe with him, are everlaſtingly beholding his glory, and delighting themſelves in him: Thus ſhall the glorified Saints live for ever. Their bodyes ſhall not need nor uſe created ſupplyes, food, phyſick, rayment, &c. which things in this animal ſtate they ſtand in need of, *Mat.* 6 32. But that's not all; for their ſouls ſhall not any longer deſire, nor hanker after any created thing; but (as the Angels) ſhall be poſſeſt of God, filled with the fulneſs of God; all the powers and faculties of them perfectly refined and ſpiritualized, abſtracted from all created things, eternally rejoycing and delighting themſelves in the contemplation and participation of the ſupreme and infinite good: For during this earthly and imperfect ſtate, not only the bodyes of good men feed upon, and are ſuſtained by the creatures in common with other men, but even their ſouls do taſte too much of worldly contentments,

ments, and drink too deep of earthly pleasures, and creature-comforts: Even the most refined souls upon earth, though they do not properly feed upon any thing below God, yet do oft dip the end of their Rod in this hony that lyes upon the earth (with *Jonathan*) do cast an unchaste eye upon their earthly enjoyments, and delight in them in a way too gross and unspiritual, having abstracted them from God, and loving them with a distinct love. But in the Resurrection it shall not be so: for the holy souls shall be perfectly conformed to the holy God, shall feed upon him singly, live upon him entirely, be wrapt up in him wholly, and be satisfied in him solely and everlastingly: and so shall they be ἰσάγγελοι, *equal to the Angels*. The creature, although it do not fill any truly sanctified soul upon earth, yet it hath some room there; but then it shall be perfectly cast out, and the soul shall be filled with all the fulness of God: the creature is now much in some godly souls, and something in all of them; but then it shall be nothing at all to them, or in them; but God shall be *all in all*; all things in all of them; as the way of the Saints living, and their glorified state is described, 1 *Cor.* 15. 28. ἵνα ᾖ ὁ θεὸς πάντα ἐν πᾶσι, *that God*

may

may be all in all. They shall inherit all things: but how is that? why, see the explication of it in the following words, God will be their God, *Rev.* 21. 7. *He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God.* God shall be unto them instead of all things. In that state there shall be no need of Sun or Moon, *Rev.* 21. 23. by which excellent and useful creatures, the whole Creation seems to be understood; for they that shall live above the Sun and Moon, shall certainly live above all things that are below these: But how then? why it follows, *The glory of God shall enlighten them, and the Lamb shall be their light*: so *Rev.* 22. 5. *And there shall be no night there, and they need no Candle, neither light of the Sun; for the Lord giveth them light*: All happiness is derived into them from God; and therefore there shall be no night; no want of any creature-comfort to them; neither shall they desire any thing more of the creature, whether *small* or *great*, whether *Candle* or *Sun*. For explication of this their blessed life, let me allude to that of our Saviour, *Luk.* 12. 24. *The Fowls of the Heaven neither sow nor reap*, yet God feedeth them: so the Saints of Heaven neither want nor desire any created good; for they feed upon God the supreme

and

and infinite good: And again, *verſ.* 27. *The Lillies neither toyl nor ſpin, and yet* Solomon *in all his glory was not arrayed like one of theſe:* Theſe bleſſed ſouls have no reſpect at all to things terrene & created; yet are they ſo filled and adorned with the glory of the infinite Majeſty, that *Solomon* in all his glory was a filthy and ragged thing in compariſon of them. In a word, the ſtate of the glorified Saints and Angels is ſet out by our Saviour in the ſame manner, by one and the ſame deſcription, and that is the ſeeing of God: The life of Angels, is called a continual beholding of the face of God, *Mat.* 18. 10. and the ſtate of the Saints glory and happineſs is alſo a ſeeing of God, *Mat.* 5. 8. *Heb.* 12. 14. *Rev.* 22. 4. *They ſhall ſee his face, and his name ſhall be in their foreheads.* Now this phraſe, the ſeeing of God, applyed both to the Saints and Angels, doth place their happineſs in God alone, excluding the creature, and it doth import the fulneſs, and clearneſs, and certainty of that their bliſs.

Thus I have ſhewed you in what *ſenſe* (though I am not able to ſhew you in what *degree*) the glorified Saints ſhall be like the Angels of God in Heaven: Their way of living, *viz.* upon the bleſſed God alone,

ſhall

ſhall be the ſame with that of the holy Angels. Application.

From the diſcovery of the future ſtate of the Saints, I find my ſelf filled with indignation.

1. *Reproof*: Againſt the *carnal conceits* that many Chriſtians have of Heaven. *Chriſtians* do I call them! Nay, herein they ſeem rather *Mahumetans*, who place Heaven in the full and laſting enjoyment of all creature-comforts; nay indeed of ſinful and abominable pleaſures, as one may read in their *Alcoran*. It may be few Chriſtians are altogether ſo ſenſual; but, ſure I am, the far greater ſort of Chriſtians (ſo called) are very groſs and carnal; at leaſt very low in their conceits of the ſtate of future happineſs; Heaven is a word as little underſtood as Holineſs; and that, I am ſure, is the greateſt myſtery in the world; it would be tedious to run thorow the particular various apprehenſions of men in this matter, and indeed impoſſible to know them. The common ſort of people underſtand either juſt nothing by Heaven but a glorious name; or at beſt, but a freeneſs from bodily torment: As, nothing of Hell affects them, but that dreadful word *fire*; ſo nothing of Heaven, but the comfortable word,

Reſt

Rest or safety. Others, it may be, think there is something positive in Heaven, and they dream of an honourable, easie, pleasant life, free from such kind of toyls, labours, pains, persecutions, reproaches, penuries which men are subject to in this life: This is a true notion, but much below the nature of that happy state; others are yet more highly affected with the words of *Glory* and *Glorious*, and seem to be much ravished with them; but are like men in a maze or wonderment, that admire something that they understand not, and are altogether confounded in their own apprehensions of it: As if a man should be mightily taken with such a fine name as *Arabia the happy*, and by a blind fervor of mind should desire to go and visit it. Others rise higher yet in their apprehensions of Heaven, and look upon it as a holy state; but that holiness is negative, *viz.* a perfect freedom from sin, and all temptations to it: And indeed this is a precious consideration, and that wherein many a weary soul finds much rest. But yet this amounts not to the life of Angels; it is a lower consideration of Heaven, than what our Saviour here presents us with. The state of the glorified Saints, shall not only be a state of freedom

from temporal pains, or eternal pains; or a freedom from ſpiritual pains and imperfections; but a ſtate of perfect *poſitive holineſs, pure light, ardent love, ſpiritual liberty, holy delights*; when all created good ſhall perfectly vaniſh, all created love ſhall be ſwallowed up, the ſoul ſhall become of a moſt God-like diſpoſition, ſhining forth in the glory that he ſhall put upon it, glorying in nothing but the bleſſed God, Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt, in his divine Image and perfections, and wrapt up entirely into his infinite fulneſs to all eternity: Which hath made me oft-times to nauſeat, and indeed to blame the poor low deſcriptions of the Kingdom of Heaven which I have found in Books and Sermons, for too drye, yea and groſs; which do deſcribe Heaven principally as a place, and give it ſuch circumſtances of beauty, firmneſs, ſecurity, light and ſplendor, pleaſant ſociety, good neighbourhood, as they think will moſt commend an earthly habitation. True indeed, the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture is pleaſed to condeſcend ſo far to our weak capacities, as to deſcribe that glorious ſtate to us by ſuch things as we do beſt underſtand, and are apt to be moſt taken with, and do moſt gratifie our ſenſes in this world; as a *King-*

dom

dom, *Paradise*, a *glorious City*, a *Crown*, an *Inheritance*, *&c.* But yet it is not the will of God that his enlightened people should rest in such low notions of eternal life: For in other places God speaks of the state of glory, according to the nature and excellency of it, and not according to the weakness of our understanding; and describes it at another rate, calling it the *Life of Angels*; as here, *the beholding of God* (Mat. 5. 8.) *a coming unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*, Ephes. 4. 13. Gods being *All* things in us, 1 *Cor.* 15. 28. It is called a *Knowing of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ*, Joh. 17. 3. In a word, which is as high as can be spoke, higher indeed than can be perfectly understood, it is called a *Being like unto God*, 1 Joh. 3. 21. *We shall be like unto him.* But this Use is not so much for *Reproof*, as it is for *Information*.

2. Here is matter of *Reproof*, yea and of just indignation against the gross, low, sensual, earthly life of Professors, who yet hope to be the children of the Resurrection, and to be as the Angels of God in Heaven. What, hope to be like them then, and yet altogether unlike them now! I speak not in a passion, but out of a just indignation that I have conceived against my self, and

againſt the generality even of Saints themſelves. I am not going to ſpeak of *Covetouſneſs* commonly ſo called; there is a ſin much like to it, which is not indeed a ſingle ſin, but an evil and unſeemly temper, which is *earthly-mindedneſs*, or minding of earthly things; or if you will, becauſe I would not be miſunderſtood, a living upon the creature, or a loving of the creature with a diſtinct love. Oh the inſenſible ſecrecy, and inſuperable power of this creature-love! I cannot ſufficiently exclaim againſt it. Why do we ſpend noble affections upon ſuch low and empty nothings! Are we called with ſuch a *high* Calling, think you, that our converſation ſhould be ſo low? Is the fulneſs of the fountain yours, and do ye yet delight to ſit down by, and bathe your ſelves in the ſhallow ſtreams? Is your *life hid with Chriſt in God*? Why then do you converſe, as if your life were bound up in the creature? Have you layd up your treaſure in the bleſſed God? what do your hearts then ſo far from it? Is your *happineſs* in Heaven? why then is not your *converſation* there too? Do ye count it your bliſs to *ſee* God? what then mean thoſe fond and wanton *glances*, that ye caſt upon created-comforts, and that unchaſte

love

love which you bestow upon things below? I mean, not only the *bleatings of the Sheep, and the lowings of the Oxen:* I speak not of the grosser sort of earthly-mindedness, sensuality, or covetousness; but of that more refined and hidden creature-love; a loving of friends, relations, health, liberty, life, and that not in God, but with a love distinct from that love wherewith we love God. To love all these in God, and for his sake, and as flowing from him, and partaking of him, and with the same love wherewith we love God himself, is allowed us: But to love them with a particular love, as things distinct from God, to delight in them meerly as creatures; and to follow them as if some good, or happiness, or pleasure were to be found in them distinct from what is in God; this is a branch of spiritual *Adultery*, I had almost said *Idolatry*. To taste a sweetness in the creature, and to see a beauty and goodness in it is our duty; but then it must be the sweetness of God in it, and the goodness of God which we ought alone to taste and see in it. As we say, *Uxor splendet radiis mariti*, the wife shines with the rayes of her husband: so more truly, every creature shines but by a borrowed light, and commends

unto us the goodneſs, and ſweetneſs, and fulneſs of the bleſſed Creator. You have heard that the glorified ſouls ſhall live upon God alone entirely, wholly, eternally; and ſhould not the leſs glorious ſouls, I mean gracious ſouls, do ſo too, in ſome degree? yea even we who are upon earth, and do yet uſe creatures, ſhould behold all the ſcattered beams of goodneſs, ſweetneſs, perfection that are in theſe creatures, all united and gathered up in God, and ſo feed upon them only in God, and upon God in all them. It is the character of wicked and godleſs men, that they ſet up, and drive a trade for themſelves; live in a way diſtinct from God, as though they had no dependence upon him; they love the world with a predominant love; they enjoy creature-comforts in a groſs, unſpiritual manner, they dwell upon the dark ſide of their mercies, they treaſure up riches, not only in their *cheſts*, but in their *hearts*; they feed upon the creature, not only with their *bodyes*, but their very *ſouls* do feed upon them; and thus, in a word, they live *without God in the world*: All this is no wonder; for that which is of the earth, muſt needs be earthly, *Joh.* 3. 31. But is it not a monſtrous thing, that a heavenly

venly soul should feed upon earthly trash? I speak without any *Hyperbole*; the famous King of *Babylon* forsaking the society of men, and herding himself with the beasts of the earth, and eating grass with the Oxen, was not so absurd a thing, nor half so monstrous or unseemly, as the children of the Most High God, forsaking the true bread of souls, and feeding upon the low fare of carnal men, even created sweetness, worldly goods: Nay, a glorious starr falling from its own sphere, and choaking it self in the dust, would not be such an eminent piece of baseness: For what is said of the true God in one sense, *Joh.* 3. 31. is true of the truly godly in this sense; *He that cometh from Heaven is above all, i. e.* above all things that are below God himself.

3. Shall this life of Angels, be also the life of Saints? *This may then serve as a powerful consideration, to mortifie in us the love of this animal life*, to make us weary of this low kind of living, and quicken us to long after so blessed a change. Well might the Apostle say indeed, that to dye was *gain*, *Phil.* 1. 21. For, is not this gain, to exchange an *animal* life, for an *Angelical* life; a life which is in some sense common to the very beasts with us, for that which in

some sense may be called the life of God? For as the blessed and holy God lives upon his own infinite and self-sufficient fulness, without being beholden to any thing without himself; so shall the Saints live upon him, and upon the self-same infinite fulness, and shall not need any creature-contributions. The Apostle indeed saith, That *the last enemy to be destroyed is death*, (1 Cor. 15. 26.) which is true of enemies without us; and it is true with respect to Christ, who shall make a general Resurrection from the dead; for that is the proper meaning of it: But it is true also, that the last enemy to be overcome within us, is the love of life: Therefore it is said, That a man will part with any thing to keep his life, *Job* 2. 4. And we do generally excuse the matter, and cry, Oh! life is sweet, life is precious. It must be confest, and it may be granted, I believe that there is an inclination of the soul to the body (arising from that dear and unconceivable union that God himself hath made of them) which is purely natural (some say altogether necessary for the maintaining of man in this complex state) and not in it self sinful: Possibly there may not be found a man upon earth so holy and mortified, in whom

whom this is not found; certainly it is the last hinderance to be removed out of the way of our perfect happiness. This, although in it self natural, yea necessary, & without blame, yet in the inordinateness of it, ordinarily, if not constantly, becomes sinful. I count him the most perfect man in the world, who loves not his own life with an inordinate, sinful love: who loves it only in God, and not with a creature-love distinct from God. There are two wayes whereby this natural and lawful love of life becomes sinful, *viz. immoderateness*, and *inordinateness*. *Immoderateness* is when men love their lives at that rate, that they are filled with unreasonable and distracting fears, cares, and thoughts about them, when the whole *business* of life is almost nothing else but a studiousness to preserve the *Being* of life. *Inordinateness* is when men, though they do not love their lives at that excessive rate, yet do love life as a creature-good, not in God, nor in order to him, but love it for it self, as something out of God: Every carnal man in the world is guilty of the latter; and I doubt but few Saints altogether free from the guilt of it. Now that this immoderate love of life ought to be subdued in Christians, all

men

men almost will grant: If any will not grant it, we can easily prove it from the command of God, *Mat.* 6. 25. *Take no thought for your life,* 1 Joh. 2. 15. *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.* Both which words, in the favourablest interpretation that can be given of them, do in the judgment of all, forbid immoderation: Nay, a meer Philosopher would enforce this from meer moral considerations, which I cannot now stand upon. But this inordinate love of life, as it is a more secret, sticking evil, a more refined corruption, is harder to be discovered, and men are loath to be convinced of the evil of it. Now this particular distinct loving of life, not as in God, but in it self, as a creature-good, is clearly condemned in that first and great Commandment, *Matth.* 22. *vers.* 37. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, q. d.* God the Supreme, Infinite, Perfect, Original, Essential, Self-sufficient Good, is to be loved in the highest, and purest, and strongest manner, that the heart of man is capable to love, and all other things only in him, and under him, and as being of him,

him, and for his sake. Let it be allowed that life is good; yet it must be added, that it is but a created good: let it be allowed that life is comfortable; yet it must be acknowledged, that mans chiefest comfort and happiness doth not stand in this animal life. So then, life it self is to be loved in God, who is the fountain and spring of life, it is to be loved in the quality of a created good, and no otherwise: Now created goods are to be loved only in the Creator, as coming from him, as partaking of him, as leading to him. Argue the case a little, thus; The soul of man is allowed to love its body with which the great God hath matcht it; and to love union with this body, which union we call life: But this body being a creature, and a creature much inferiour to it self, and much more ignoble than it self, cannot in reason be judged to be the fit and adequate object of its strongest and best affections: That must needs be something more excellent than it self, and that cannot be any thing in this world (for this world hath nothing so noble, so excellent in it as the soul of man) it must indeed be the Creator himself. Well, seeing God is the supreme, self-sufficient, perfect Good, he is to be loved

loved with all the ſtrength and powers of the ſoul, ſingly and entirely: And the will of God, being God himſelf, is not only to be ſubmitted to, or reſted in, but to be choſen and loved above all created things; yea even above life it ſelf, the beſt of creatures. So then, if it be the will of God to call for our lives, we ought readily to give them up; becauſe we ought to love the will of God much more than our lives. I pray you drink in that notion, *viz.* that the will of God being pure, holy, perfect, ſhould not only be ſubmitted to, or reſted in, but even loved and choſen above all creatures: Now the will of God is not that only whereby he teacheth men, and preſcribes Laws to them, but that whereby he rules, and governs the world, and diſpoſes of men in any condition of life, or takes away their lives from them. The eternal fountain of goodneſs can ſend forth nothing but what is perfectly good: and that which is perfectly good, ought to be loved with an univerſal, pure, and (as far as poſſible) perfect love. This you will ſay, perhaps, is a high and a hard ſaying: But, let it not ſeem impoſſible, for a man to love his own life only in God, and in ſubordination to him; for this God

God requires (and he requires not things impoſſible) *Luke* 14 26. *If any man come after me, and hate not his own life, he cannot be my Diſciple, i. e.* not ſimply hate it, but in compariſon of me and my will: It is not then impoſſible; nay, you ſee it is a neceſſary duty, without which we cannot be Chriſts Diſciples. The Saints of old found it poſſible. Holy *Paul* gives this anſwer readily, *Act.* 21. 13. *I am ready to dye at* Jeruſalem *for the name of the Lord Jeſus*; and *Act.* 20. 24. *I count not my life dear unto me, ſo that I might finiſh my courſe with joy:* It is witneſſed of the whole Army of the Saints, in *Rev.* 12. 11. That *they loved not their lives unto the death, i. e.* they did not value them in reſpect of God and his truth. Neither let any one flatter himſelf, and ſay, Yea if I were called to dye for God, I would rather do it than deny him: For the will of God is as much to be eyed in his ſending for us by a natural death, as by martyrdom; and a not giving up our lives to him at any time, is as truly to deny him and his will, as not to give them up at the ſtake, when we are called to it. Beſides, how ſhall we imagine that he that is unwilling to dye in his bed, ſhould be willing

to

to dye at a ſtake? Now this duty of being mortified to the love of this animal life, being ſo difficult, yet ſo neceſſary, and ſo noble; how doth it become every Saint to ſtudy to attain to this perfection! which, that we may, let us preſs upon our ſelves this Conſideration, this Doctrine, That the glorified Saints ſhall live as the Angels of God in Heaven. We know that if this body were broken down, this low life cut off, we ſhould live like Angels, not being beholden any more to poor creatures for help or comfort, but ſhould be filled with the fulneſs of God, filled with his Image and Glory, and live upon him entirely for evermore. Yea I may add, that this very living above our own lives, meerly at the will of God, is a participation of the Angelical Life even in this world: Therefore labour to be mortified to that love of this life which is here upon earth; yea be weary of it, yea almoſt aſhamed of it.

4. Shall we thus live the lives of the Angels, ſubſiſting in God, feaſting upon him, filled with him to all eternity? *This may moderate our ſorrow which we conceive for the loſs of any created good*, houſes, lands, husband, wife, children, &c. yet a little

little while, and we shall not miss them, shall not need them, shall not desire them any more: The blessed Angels live a glorious life, and they have none of these; but are perfectly satisfied in the enjoyment of God alone: They have no wives nor children, yet they want none: And yet a little while, and we shall have none neither, neither shall we want them, having all things in the God of all things: They neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are in conjunction with the Father, with love, and goodness, and truth it self; and so they have no want of any thing. If you have no Candles left in the house, yet it is towards day-break, and the Sun will rise upon you, and you shall need none, and yet have light enough too. In a word, learn to live beside them whilst you have them, and you will be the better able to live without them, when they are removed.

5. I come now to the fifth and last Use that I shall make of this Doctrine; and oh that you and I may make this happy use of it! Shall the Saints be as the Angels of God in their way of living, in living upon God, and enjoying all happiness in him alone for ever? Shall this certainly be our

life

life in Heaven? oh then *labour to begin this life upon earth!* If you cannot perfectly transcribe, yet, at least, imitate that Angelical kind of life. Though you are here imprisoned in a body of earth, and oft cumbred and clogg'd with bodily infirmities, and called to attend upon bodily necessities; yet, as far as this animal state will permit, live upon God. Do not excuse nor vindicate that low kind of earthly life; do not justifie your living below and besides God, but stir up your selves to behold where your happiness lies, and live not willingly below it. Certainly a godly soul hath more than bare hope in this world: God the blessed, infinite and communicative good, hath not lockt up himself so far out of sight, but that he gives his people a comfortable beholding of him even whilst they are in their Pilgrimage: and what *Soloman* saith of the life of the godly, he means it of their present life, *Prov.* 15. 24. *The way of life is above to the wise:* Their living not only shall be, but is now above; it is a high way of living: They are certainly a puny sort of Mechanical Christians, that think and talk only of a Heaven to come, and dream of an happiness without

out them, and distinct from them: The truly godly and God-like soul cannot so content himself, but being spirited and principled from above, is carryed out after the Infinite and Almighty Good, as a thing is carryed towards its centre; and hastens into his embraces, as the Iron hastens to the Loadstone, and longs to be in conjunction with it. If therefore ye be from Heaven, live above all, above all earthly things: *If ye be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above*, Col. 3. 1. If ye be *born of God*, live upon God, and *suck not the breasts* of a stranger. Deny self, live besides self, *i. e.* live not to the lusts, live not to the service of your senses, to the lust of the flesh, to the lust of the eye, to the pride of life; let not your souls be servants to your sins, no nor to your senses; that were for servants to ride on horseback, and Princes to walk on foot, *Eccles.* 10. 7. Live above self, *i. e.* let your souls quit all their own interest in themselves, and entirely resign themselves to God as to all points of duty and service. But that's not all; neither is that it which I press you to from these words; but live above the creature, and whatsoever is in it, *viz.* delighting in God, conversing and communing

ning with him alone, as the chiefest Good. Desire not any creature any further, than as it may help you forward to the Creator, neither delight in it any further, than as it either represents some of the divine perfections, witnesseth something of divine love, or leadeth to some divine participation or communion: Seeing we shall come to live upon God, and delight in God alone without any creature, let us now live upon, feed upon, love God alone in every creature: Now to give you a more distinct knowledge of this high and noble life, I will explain it in some particulars, negatively and affirmatively. First *Negatively.*

1. *Live not upon Self*, I speak not of living unto Self, but live not upon Self, Self-excellencies, Self-sufficiencies, any created accomplishments; which was the life of the *Stoicks*, those great Philosophers, who placed happiness in the enjoyment of themselves, which they called αὐτάρκεια. To enjoy ones self indeed is a high duty, a noble priviledge, a duty of the Gospel, *Luk.* 21. 19. *Possess ye your souls*: But how must we enjoy our selves? why, only in God. He enjoys himself,

1. Not who in a sullen melancholy,

retires

retires to a ſolitary and monaſtical life, as many of the ſowrer ſort of Papiſts do.

2. Nor he that in a proud mood diſdains the perfections of God ſhining forth in other men; and hiding himſelf from them through envy, contents himſelf to ſit and admire his own perſonal accompliſhments, as many humoriſts do.

3. Nor he who finding nothing without him, nor knowing nothing above him to give his ſoul her full reſt, ſettles upon a foundation of his own, and admires a ſelf-ſufficiency in the temper of his own ſpirit a little ſubdued by Philoſophical precepts, as the *Stoicks* did, and our Quakers do: But he who enjoyes himſelf in God, *i. e.* who doth not view himſelf in the narrow point of his own Being, but taking a view of himſelf in the unbounded eſſence of God, loves, and enjoyes, and values himſelf, and all his perſonal excellencies as he is in God, and partakes of his perfections. To live in a way of ſelf-converſe, is below the end of mans creation, who was made for a higher good: And hereby a man ſhall never obtain true happineſs; for it is peculiar to God alone to be happy in himſelf. "In a word, a ſoul that confines it "ſelf to its ſelf, and lives, and moves, and

'rejoyces only within the narrow cell of 'its own particular Being, deprives it self 'of that Almighty and Original Goodness 'and Glory that fills the world, and 'shines thorow the whole Creation.

2. *Live not upon any creature without your selves.* Self indeed is a creature; but yet for clearness in proceeding, we shall distinguish them. Now this is the life of the greatest sort of men, they live beside God, and move only within the sphere of the creature: you will easily understand that I speak not of the bodyes living upon the creature; for so God hath appointed that it shall live: and yet as to this too, I say with our Saviour, *Man liveth not by bread alone, &c.* But I speak of the soul of man living upon the creature as its highest good, and feeding upon it as its best fare: They rise up early, and sit up late, and God is not in all their thoughts: They are filled with domestick and forein comforts, but behold not the Father of Lights from whom all these descend: They live upon the good things of the world, yet live without God in the world. Now by these men,

1. I do not mean those Heathens that in the most Idolatrous manner, do in the

the literal ſenſe, ſet up the creatures for Gods.

2. Nor thoſe Chriſtians that in a moſt groſs manner do make Idols of the creatures, and place their happineſs in them.

3. No nor only thoſe earthly Profeſſors, who follow the world too eagerly, and have ſuch a deep and rooted reſpect for it, that they can be ordinarily content to ſuffer creature-employments to juſtle God and duties out of their hearts and houſes, whoſe worldlineſs is apparently too hard for their Religion. Who then? Shall we come any nearer! yes;

4. Thoſe are guilty of creature-converſe, who do not enjoy all creatures in God; who love any thing in any creature with a diſtinct love, that do not love it only in God; who love ſilver, gold, houſes, land, trading, friends, with a particular pinching love. Oh take heed of this creature-love; of valuing any created thing any otherwiſe than in God, any otherwiſe than as being from God, partaking of him, and leading to him.

3. *Live not upon Ordinances:* Theſe are Gods inſtitutions; love them, cleave to them, attend upon them, let no temptation cauſe you to leave them; but live not upon

them, place not your Religion, place not your hope, your happiness in them, but love them only in God; attend upon them, yet not so much upon them, as upon God in them; lie by the Pool, but wait for the Angel: love not, no not a divine ordinance for its own sake: Why, who doth so? Alas who almost doth not?

1. Thus did they in *Ezek.* 33. 32. who delighted in the Prophets eloquence, and in the Rhetorick of his Sermons as much as in a well tuned voice, and harmonious musick: and so do thousands in *England*, who read the Bible for the style or the stories sake, and love to sit under learned and elegant discourses, more for *accomplishment*, than for *conversion*: And swarms of Priests who preach themselves, more than Christ Jesus even in his own ordinances; as a proud Boy rides a horse into the Market, to set forth himself more than his Masters goods.

2. But there are many not so gross as these, who do yet use ordinances in a way very gross and unspiritual, placing their devotion in them, and sinking their Religion into a settled course of hearing or praying; who will wait upon God (as they call it) at some set and solemn times, *New Moons* and *Sabbaths*, it may be evening

and

and morning; but Religion must not be too busie with them, nor intermeddle in their ordinary affairs, or worldly employments; it hath no place there; they do not count it a garment for every dayes wear.

3. And not only these, but even almost all men are too apt to seek rest in duties and ordinances, or, at least, to be pretty well satisfied with the work done, whether they have conversed with God there or no; Oh if you love your souls, seek you happiness higher! conversing with divine ordinances, I confess, is honourable and amiable, but it is too low a life for an immortal soul. *Affirmatively*,

Let nothing satisfie you but God himself; take up with no pleasure, no treasure, no portion, no paradise, nay, no Heaven, no happiness, below the infinite, supreme, and self-sufficient good. Let your eye be upon him, and his all-filling fulness; let your desire be unto him, and to the remembrance of his name; follow hard after to know the Lord, and to enjoy the Father through his Son Jesus Christ; let your fellowship be with the Father, and with the Son by the spirit, 1 *Joh.* 1. 3. O love the Lord all ye his Saints, *Psal.* 31. 23. yea love

him with all your ſoul, and all your ſtrength, *Mat.* 22. 37. yea and keep your ſelves alwayes in the love of God, *Jude* 21. perſevere and increaſe in the love of God; *Keep your ſelves in the love of God.* Oh ſweet duty! Oh amiable pleaſant task! Oh ſweet and grateful command! Away ye crowd of creatures, I muſt keep my heart for my God: Away ye gawdy ſuitors, away ye glittering toyes, there is no room for you: My whole ſoul, if its capacity were ten thouſand times larger than it is, were too ſcant to entertain the ſupreme good, to let in infinite goodneſs and fulneſs. Oh charge it upon your ſelves with the greateſt vehemence! love the Lord O my ſoul, keep thy ſelf in the love of God; let the love of God conſtrain you, and keep your ſelves under the moſt powerful conſtraints of it. In a word, live upon God as upon uncreated life it ſelf; drink at the fountain, feed upon infinite fulneſs; depend upon Aſmighty Power, refer your ſelves to unſearchable wiſdom, and unbounded love; ſee nothing but God in the creature, taſte nothing but God in the world, delight your ſelves in him; long for communion with him, and communications from him, to receive of his fulneſs grace for grace. Then do we

live most like Angels, when we live most purely in God, and find all the powers of our souls spending themselves upon him, and our selves, our life, and all the comforts of it flowing from him, and again swallowed up in him. But because we are yet in the body, I shall explain it in these following particulars.

1. *Converse with God in all your Self-excellencies.* I bade you before not converse with these; now, I say, converse with God in these. Thus do the Angels, they know nothing that they have of their own, they enjoy nothing distinct from God: They are excellent creatures, excellent in knowledge, power, holiness, &c. yet they enjoy all their excellencies in God, and ascribe them all to him, *Rev.* 7. 12. And so let us labour to do.

1. View your selves, not in your own particular Beings, but in the Essence of God; look upon your selves as being and subsisting in the midst of an Infinite Essence, in which the whole Creation is, as it were, wrapt up, and doth subsist.

2. And what ever excellency you find in your souls or bodyes, look not upon it as your own; maintain not a *Meum* and *Tuum*, a distinction of interests between God and your

your selves; but look upon all as Gods, and enjoy it in him.

3. When you find your selves tempted to cast a fond and unchaste look upon the beauty, strength, activity, or temper of your own bodyes, upon the ingenuity, wisdom, constancy, courage, composedness of your own souls; take heed of settling into a selfish admiration of any of them, but enjoy them in God, and say, This, O my body, this, O my soul, is no other than the portraicture of the Blessed God; these created excellencies are broken beams of the infinite, unspotted, uncreated perfections! *Jer.* 9. 23, 24. Having once attained to this, we shall no longer covet to be admired, desire to be commended, fret at being undervalued; I mean not in a selfish manner, but rather break out in a spiritual passion with the Psalmist, *Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works in the children of men!* Psal. 107. 8.

3. Nay, let me add, when you find your selves ready to put your own stamp upon Gods best coin; to look upon supernatural gifts and graces with a sinful, selfish admiration, remember that you have them only in Christ Jesus, and enjoy them in your head;

head; labour to enjoy grace it self only in Christ; as the Apostle, *Gal.* 2. 20. *I, yet not I, but Christ in me: I laboured, yet not I, but the grace of God,* 1 Cor. 15. 10. So ought we to glory; I believe, I love, I am patient, penitent, humble; yet not I, but the grace of God that is with me, Christ Jesus that dwelleth in me. And indeed a godly man who thus lives at the very height of his own Being, yea and above it too, knows best how to reverence himself, yea and to love himself too, and yet without any self-love: For he loves himself in God, and his own endowments as divine ornaments.

2. Converse with God, and live upon him in the excellencies of all other creatures, and in all your creature-enjoyments. We cannot live without creatures, as the Angels do indeed; but let us come as near them as we can, which is by living above creatures: place your happiness in God, and your hearts upon him; labour to find God all things to you, and in you, and to be filled with his fulness; labour to get your understandings filled with the knowledge of God, your wills filled with his divine will, your hearts filled with his infinite goodness and sweetness, your memo-

ries

ries filled with the remembrance of his name, your whole souls filled with his holy and pure Image, filled with the fruits of his holy Spirit: Nay, let these very bodyes be filled not only with his good creatures; but more especially with his good will in the creatures. It is said indeed of the sensual Epicures of the world, that their *bellyes are filled* with Gods *hid treasure, i. e.* with rare and precious delicacies: But how much better doth God fill the bellyes of his Saints with his hid treasures, when he feedeth them with his divine favour, and *dippeth his hand* with them *in the dish?* This is meat within meat, which the Saints eat of, which other men, though they feed at the same Table, know not of. The glorified Saints shall be satisfied wholly and perfectly with the Divine Image, shining gloriously on them, and in them; to which purpose that of the Psalmist may be accommodated, *Psal. 17. ult. When I awake, &c.* Well, we cannot be so satisfied in this life, it seems; however, though we cannot be so satisfied with it, yet let us not be satisfied without it, nor satisfied with any thing besides it: Resolve, holy soul, well, if I must not be fully satisfied with

the

the Image of my heavenly Father till I awake, I will lie down and fall asleep hungry as I am then; for I will not fill my mouth with chaff, nor my soul with *the husks that the Swine do eat.* But, in the mean time, get what you can of God out of creature-enjoyments.

1. *Enjoy all things for God:* And that these two wayes.

1. *Use all for him:* Those riches, honours, interests, friends, which are *cloggs upon the heels* of others, let them be as *heels* to you to carry you Heaven-ward; let your souls be *winged* with those very enjoyments, wherewith the *wings* of others are *pinioned*; and that which is fewel to their worldly lusts, let it be as fewel to feed and nourish your spiritual love. To use what we have for God, is the only way of not abusing it: This is one way of enjoying all for God, to use all for him; and yet there is something higher in that phrase of enjoying all for God, than this, *viz.*

2. *Value no creature-comfort any further than as it leads to God:* And this in a double sense too. *First*, Value things to be good only by this, by their leading you unto God. *Perfectum in suo genere est mensura*

sura reliquarum; Now God being the Supreme and Infinite Good, any thing is so far good, as it leads to the enjoyment of him: Now the enjoyment of God is only in being like to him; Holiness is his Image: So then, every thing is good that tends to sanctification, and to make men partakers of a Divine Nature. We are usually mistaken in the true notion of good and evil, of mercies and judgements; judging according to the taste, as foolish Patients do; but Gods thoughts are not as our thoughts. Measure all things by the proportion they bear, and the tendency they have to the Supreme Good; and call not any thing evil that brings nearer to him, nor any thing good that draws off from him. *Secondly*, When you have found a thing that is really good, tending and leading to the chief good, and to the possession of him; labour to enjoy it, and rejoyce in it only under this notion, as such; when you love it, let it be with a pure spiritual love; and so order your delight in it, that it may be said, you do rather rejoyce in the end of it, than in the enjoyment of it.

2. Another way of living upon God in the creature, is, *To enjoy all things as partaking of him. Every good and perfect gift*

is from above. Every beam of created light floweth out of the *Father of light*, James 1.17. When the blessed and glorious God framed this stately fabrick of the visible world, because there was nothing better in the world than himself, he was pleased to copy out himself in it, and to spread his own infinite perfections over it, and thorow it, *Rom.* 1. 20. so that every particular good is a blossom of the first goodness; every created excellency is a dark draught of God, and a broken beam of this infinite Sun of Righteousness. Created life, beauty, wisdom, goodness, sweetness, are nothing else but effluxes, or rather ebullitions out of the self-sufficient fountain, scant communications made of himself, from uncreated life, essential wisdom, universal goodness: And under this notion we ought only to enjoy them, and delight in them: And if we do so, we do not so much enjoy them, as God in them. Oh labour to do so! look upon the perfections which you find here below, not so much as the perfections of this or that particular Being, but as they are so many drops risen out of the fountain of all perfections, in whom they all meet, and are concentred. It is well expresst by one, *In a*

particular

particular Being, love the universal goodness; let the whole world be as the Garden of God to you, where every creature is a flower, from which you may suck something of the divine sweetness. Alas, at what a low and sensual rate do we live, when we rejoyce in creatures, either as they are *excellent*, or as they are *ours*; whereas indeed neither of these is true: For they are not excellent, but God is excellent in them: And how can we call any thing our own, when God made both us and all things for himself? O how injurious is it to the blessed God, when we rob him of his own perfections that he hath imprinted upon the creature, by laving it, and delighting in it not as in him, but as something distinct from him! Nay, we are then injurious to our selves, as we shall see by and by. Labour to enjoy, and to converse with God in the creatures. O *how precious are the thoughts of thee unto me*, O God! cryed *David* when he had been meditating of the creatures excellencies, *Psal.* 139.17. Labour to abstract your minds from terrene things even in the enjoyment of them, and call upon your selves to love, and live, and feed upon God in them; live not upon the dark side of your mercies, but upon the repre-

representations of God in them. Is there any thing good? Oh this is a taste of infinite Goodness! Is there any thing sweet? Oh how sweet is the God that made it so! Is there any thing lovely? it is a picture of him whose name is *Love*. Is any thing firm, stable, lasting? it is a shadow of that glorious essence, with whom there is no shadow of change. Have you any thing strong? it arises out of that God with whom is *everlasting strength*. Doth any creature give rest, ease, refreshment? it springs out of the Allsatisfying fulness of God. In a word, labour to climb up by every created excellency, as by so many beams to the Father of lights: let all the world be to you as Gods Temple, and be ready to say of every place, as *Jacob*. *How dreadful is this place; surely this is no other than the house of God!* that God who runs thorow all created Beings, and from himselves derives several prints of beauty and excellency all the world over: But especially take heed of your own created-comforts, that they do not insensibly lead away your hearts, and ensnare you into a sinful, particular, distinct love of them; which is a sin soon committed, hardly

diſcerned, and moſt hardly reformed. If any be freed from theſe inordinate affections, ſure they are but few, and thoſe few have come dearly by it; as he ſaid, in another caſe, *with a great ſumm* they have *obtained this freedom*; they have payed for it, not with the foreskins of the Philiſtines, but with the lives of what they ſo loved, there being no way to cure this evil diſtemper, but cutting off the member infected with it, the part that it fed upon. As a branch of this head, let me add, labour to *live upon God in the excellencies of other men*: value them and all their accompliſhments only in God, as he that did *diligere Deum habitantem in Auguſtino*: Admire God, and enjoy God in them: Where ever you ſee wiſdom, goodneſs, ingenuity, holineſs, juſtice, or any other accompliſhment: ſay, Here and there is God. And this is the honeſt way of making our ſelves Maſters of whatever is another mans, and enjoying it, as truly as he himſelf doth; yea, as truly as if it were our own: when we behold all theſe beams, as coming from the ſame fountain of lights, and do love them all in him with an univerſal love. This is the rare Art of having nothing, yet poſſeſſing

all things, of being rich, though one have nothing: and of being wise, though one know nothing.

3. The last way of living upon God in the creature, is, *To taste and feed upon the love of God in them*; not only his common bounty, but his special love in Christ. The good will of God gives a sweet relish to every morsel, as I hinted before. Even in the midst of all your delightful, pleasant, sweet enjoyments, let your souls be more affected with this, than with them; let this be as the *Manna* lying upon the top of all your outward comforts, which your spirits may gather up, and feed upon. But this I touched upon before; therefore I shall add no more concerning it. Thus I have shewed you how you may imitate the life of Angels in living upon God, even whilst you live in the body. To this I may add another particular or two.

3. *Converse with God, and live upon him in all his Ordinances:* Let communion with God be your drift in every duty, and the very life, and soul, and sweetness of every ordinance. You never read of a soul more thirsty after ordinances, than *David*, as might appear abundantly: yet if you look

well into the expressions, you will find that it was not so much after them, as after God in them; not after the dead letter, but after the living God, *Psa.* 42.2. *My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God*; and *Psal.* 84.2. *My heart and my flesh cryeth out for the living God.* Let the Word preacht or read be as a voyce from Heaven talking with you; let your conference be a comment upon that Word; let meditation be as a kind of bringing down God into your souls; and prayer as a raising up of your souls into God, nothing but faith and love put into phrases. And so of all the rest.

4. *Converse with God in all his Providences*; prosperity, adversity, plenty, penury, health, sickness, peace and perplexity. This is a large Theme: But as to prosperity, I have spoken something already, under that head of conversing with God in creature-enjoyments: As for adversity, I have said much more in a large discourse, to describe and commend the Art of conversing with God in afflictions: Briefly at this time, converse not with losses, wants, afflictions, but with God in them; and that not only with the justice, righteousness,

righteousnes, severity and soveraignty of God in them, but with the goodnes and mercy of God in them: They are dark Providences, we had not need to dwell all together on the dark side of them. If all the wayes of the Lord towards his people be *mercy and truth*, Psa. 25. 10 then his roughest and most uncouth wayes are so too: If God be wholly love, 1 *Joh.* 4. 8. then his very corrections proceed not from hatred: If it be his name to be good, and to do good, *Psal.* 119. 68. where have we learnt then to call his afflicting Providences Evils, and to divide evil, which is but one, even as God is one, into *culpa* and *pœna*, sin and affliction? surely we speak as men: And if God call them so, he speaks after the manner of men, as he often doth. If the governing will of God be pure, perfect, and infinitely good and righteous, ought we not to converse with it in a free and chearful manner; yea and to love it too? In a word, pore not upon creature-changes, nor the uncertain wheels of motion that are turning up and down, we know not how, nor how oft; but fix your souls upon that All-seeing eye, that unbounded understanding, that unsearchable and infinite

goodnes that derives it self thorow the whole universe, and sits in all the wheels of motion, governing all the strange motions of the creatures in a wonderful and powerful manner, and carrying them all in their several Orbs to one last and blessed end.

Thus imitate the Angelical life, even whilst you are in the body; converse with God in self-excellencies, in creature-excellences, Ordinances, Providences: And yet labour to be more like them still, to abstract your mind from all these, and all material and sensible things, and to converse with God without the help of any creature, I mean in the spirit, and by a secret feeling of his Almighty Goodnes, and the energy of grace, and the communications of a divine life, in your souls. In a word, if you would taste of Heaven whilst you are upon Earth, labour above all things for a true conjunction of your hearts with God, in a secret feeling of his goodnes, and a reciprocation of love to him; and to find the holy and blessed God exercising his grace and power upon all the faculties of your souls, and rendring them like unto himself; and all these powers of the soul

mutually

mutually ſpending themſelves upon him freely and entirely, as upon the chiefeſt good, which is their proper and full object. Seeing the Saints in glory ſhall be like unto the Angels of God in their way of living in and upon God alone, receive, I pray, this Exhortation, which I have ſo largely proſecuted, and labour to begin that life as far as you can, upon Earth. Is there not reaſon for ſuch an Inference? Doth it not now flow naturally from the Doctrine? If you think it do not, I will add two or three particulars to ſtrengthen this Inference; or at leaſt to clear it.

1. It is highly reaſonable that we begin to be that which we expect to be for ever, to learn that way of living in which we hope to live to all eternity: So that I infer upon as ſtrong ground as the Apoſtle, 1 *Joh.* 3.3. *He that hath this hope purifieth himſelf, &c.*

2. If this be the life of Angels, then it is the higheſt and nobleſt life that any created Being is capable of. As by the *bread of Angels*, and the *tongue of Angels*, the moſt excellent food, and the moſt excellent language, is underſtood in Scripture; ſo muſt we underſtand this life of Angels. Now it is very ſuitable to the reaſonable ſoul, that

immortal, noble Being, to aim at the higheſt and nobleſt life: See *Mat.*16.26. *What ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?*

3. This ſhall not only be our life in Heaven, but it ſelf is ſomething of Heaven, a beginning of Heaven. This life is not a thing really diſtinct from life eternal, *Joh.*17.3. *this is life eternal, &c.* 1 Joh.5.13. *Ye have eternal life.* Therefore we read of eternal life abiding in men, and not abiding in them, 1 *Joh.* 3 15. So alſo *Joh.*6.54. *Whoſo eateth my fleſh, hath eternal life.* A holy ſoul thus deified, thus living in and upon God, is as truly glorified upon Earth in ſome degree, as the world is enlightened by the morning Sun, which is as truly, though not ſo glorioufly, as by the Sun in its greateſt height. Oh low and ignoble ſpirits, that can be ſatisfied with a happineſs which ſhall only be in the world to come! Certainly it is true and proper ſpeech to ſay that a *Participation* of God is an *Anticipation* of Heaven; and to be like unto him, is to be with him. You ſee what reaſon I have to make ſuch an Inference, and to form it into ſuch an earneſt Exhortation: Oh therefore I beſeech you before God and his holy Angels, to endeavour to *be* like him, and *live* like them! *Object.* Say not

not; How can men on Earth live like Angels! *Anſ.* 1. But fall on and imitate them, though it be—— *haud paſſibus æquis*: labour to be ὡς ἄγγελοι, if you cannot be altogether ἰσάγγελοι. 2. We are bidden to live the life of God, *Mat.* 5. *ult. Be perfect, &c.* So 1 *Pet.* 1. 15. *Be ye holy, &c.* If I ſpeak high, how high ſpeak theſe Texts? *Obj.* Say not, But how can this animal life permit this! *Anſ.* 1. For 1. Thus men have lived in the body. Thus lived *Enoch*, *Gen.* 5. 22. Thus lived *Paul*, *Phil.* 1. 21. Thus lived *David* that man after Gods own heart (the greateſt and moſt divine character that can be given of a mortal man) *Pſal.* 73. 25. there is none upon Earth that I deſire beſides thee. 2. Cannot we live in the body, except we live to the body? You ſee Saints upon Earth live above other men upon Earth, and yet a little more pains, take the other flight, and you may live above your ſelves too, higher than you do: I will only add a Motive or two to this duty of living upon God.

1. *The laſt enemy to be overcome, is creature-love*: This is the laſt enemy that keeps the field, by which alone the greateſt ſort of men do periſh everlaſtingly; beat down this, and you win the day, and ſhall wear the

the Crown: nay the very conquest of it is a Crown, as I said before.

2. *To live upon God in the creature, is to enjoy the creature in the best sense.* You will lose nothing of the creature by this means, but shall enjoy it more fully than ever you did. For the creature is ten thousand times sweeter in God, than it is in it self. Yea in a word, this is the way to enjoy all the world, and to enjoy the accomplishments of all men, and all things as much as if they were your own.

3. *It is the way never to lose any thing.* He that lives upon God, spends upon a stock that cannot be wasted, drinks at a fountain that cannot be exhausted. So much as we enjoy of God in the creature, we do not lose with it: and that which we do not so enjoy, we deserve to lose. This then is the secure and honourable life, in comparison of which the life of a Prince is but a wallowing in the mire. *Lord give us evermore this bread*, and hearts to feed upon it! *Amen.*

FINIS.

Dei & Animæ Consortium:

SIVE

Periphrasis in posterius ἀμυσίχητον,

1 John 4. 16.

—ὁ μένων ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ ἐν τῷ θεῷ μένει, καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἐν αὐτῷ.

OMnia mi Deus est; idem Deus est
Ipse Deo totus; totus & ipse Deo.

(meus omnis:

Omnia mihi Deus est.
In Deo cujusque boni creati
Singulæ vires penitissimè insunt
In Deo solamináque implicantur
Omniæ vitæ.

Omnis

Omnia Deus est mens.

Omne quod fecit mihi dat benignus,
Omne quod præ se quia nil pependit,
Insuper menti dedit appetenti
Omne quod ipse est.

Ipse in Deo totus.

In Deo versor medio, que spiro,
In Deo grandescere concupisco,
Luce tot us radiis paternâ
Luce receptis.

Ipse totus Dei.

Non mei, non alterius creati
Sum, (Deus) sed quantus ego, tuus sum:
Vita quos à te radios recepi,
Oro, reflectat!

Cuncta te subter (Deus alme) quæ sunt,
Indito mente inferiora nostrâ:
Absit ut rebus studeat caducis
Mens generosa!

Fac teipsum, mi Deus, ipsiarem
Huic meæ menti penitus seipsâ;
Fac meipsum, mi Deus, uniorem,
Quàm mihi, tecum!

GOD

GOD and the SOUL:

OR

A Periphrase upon

1 JOHN 4. 16.

---dwelleth in God, and God in him.

MY God is All things unto me;
All God is also mine:
I am, O Lord, wholly in thee;
And also wholly thine.

God is All things unto me.
The powers of each created good
In God are all contain'd;
In him my Comforts all do bud,
Flourish, and are maintain'd.

All

All God is mine:
He gave me all that he had made,
All which did not suffice
My larger Soul; therefore I pray'd,
He gave himself likewise.

I am wholly in God.
I'th midst of God I live and breath,
In him I'm only bright,
The rayes with which I shine beneath,
Are borrow'd from his light.

I am wholly God's.
O Lord I'm not at all mine own,
Nor for another free:
Let life be a reflection
Of beams receiv'd from thee!

All things below thee (Lord) I judge
To be below my Soul;
Oh let my nobler mind even grudge,
It self in dust to rowl!

Be more my self, O God, to me
Than I my self have been;
Make me, O God, more one with thee,
than with my self! *Amen.*

FINIS.